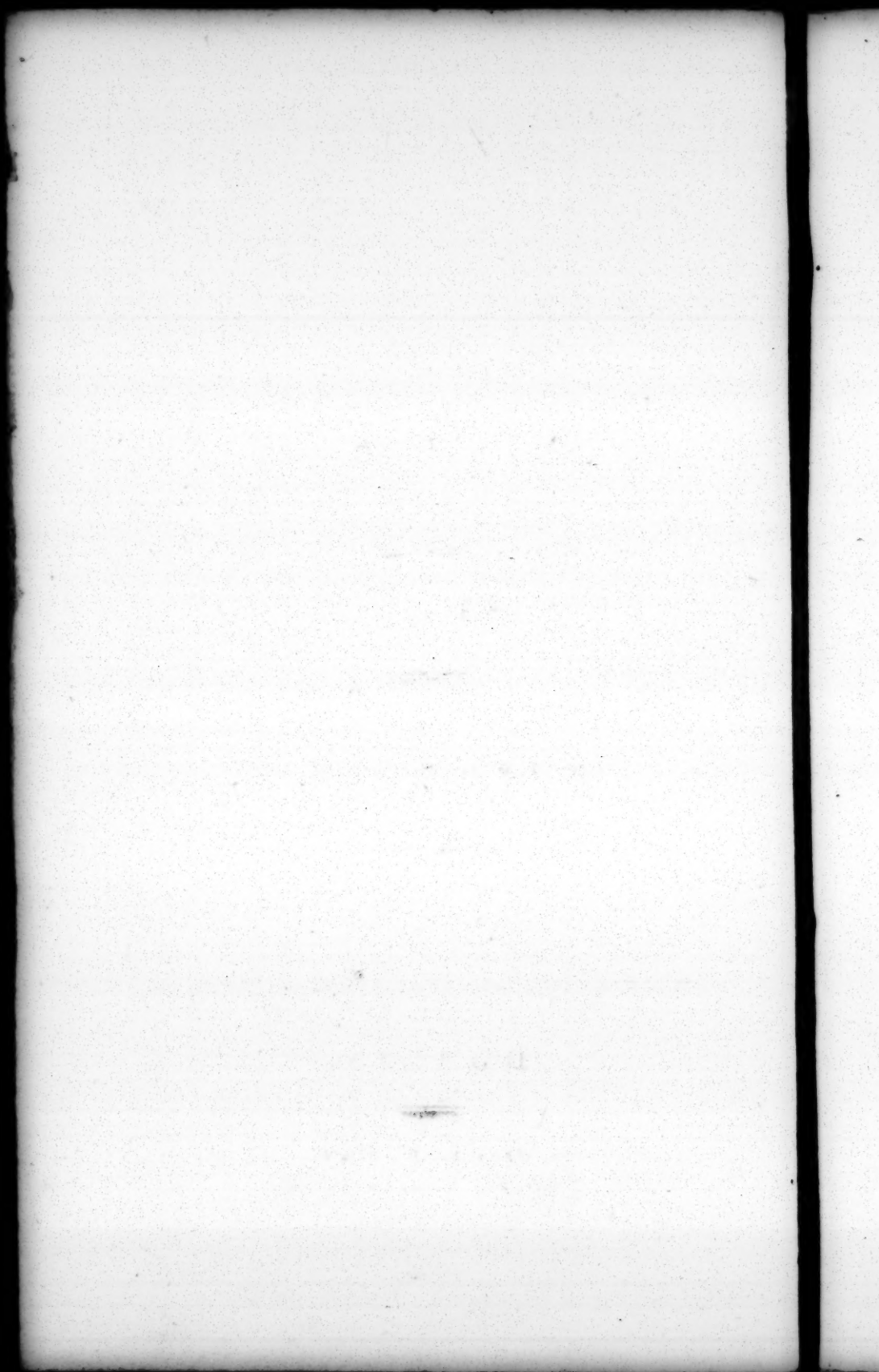


LORD FITZHENRY:

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N O V E L.



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BY MISS GUNNING.

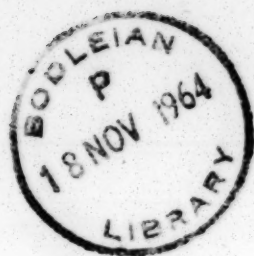
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1794.



LORD FITZHENRY.

THE elegant hero of my tale, if he does not deserve to be called Nature's *chef-d'œuvre*, yet the *tout ensemble* of his figure, countenance, and manner, certainly did her a great deal of credit : and though he might not be ranged in her cabinet of monstrous curiosities which are without flaw or imperfection, yet in her collection of animal portraits she had produced few pieces more highly finished.

The person of Lord Fitzhenry at eighteen was what one seldom sees

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other well-grown youths attain till they have written man. At eighteen his height was determined sufficiently above the common size to give dignity, and not enough to take away any thing from gracefulness—The title page to his heart was struck in a handsome type; and the contents of the book answered to the beauty of the letter. He was frank, generous, gentle, tender, thoughtless, spirited, rash, and precipitant; qualities that never acted together, *mais chacun à son tour*. His classical knowledge intitled him to the approbation of learned men, and his knowledge in the science of refined politeness to the admiration of well-informed women. If to all these *agréments* be added his pretensions to a splendid earldom, and his present magnificent appointments be justly weighed; the calculators of good deserts and good fortune will know exactly how to estimate Lord Fitzhenry them-

themselves, and how he must have been estimated by others.

About the time he had finished his school studies, the extreme rapidity of his growth very much alarmed the Earl and Countess of Uxington, who reckoned the graces, talents and virtues of this promising son more valuable than all their other possessions. They were seriously, nay and panic-struck, to see him on his return from Eton grown full two inches in six months, and now half an inch above six feet. Oxford would have been his next seminary destination; but this plan for very natural causes was delayed, and another, perhaps quite as agreeable to Lord Fitzhenry himself, as naturally adopted—an excursion of pleasure being to most young people more desirable than one of improvement.

Fitzhenry's soul, formed alike for love and friendship, selected two of his College companions, whom he brought to pass their time with him at Uxington Lodge, before he left it for the University. With these young men, Sir Valentine Willis and Frederic Wardour, he had one morning been using a good deal of manual exercise; and when they joined the family to snatch a hasty breakfast, that they might return refreshed to their sports, every eye was fixed on his face, over which violent exertions of strength had thrown a veil of very becoming vermillion. Lord Uxington shook his head, and looked at the Countess, as if he would have said, That colour is too much: the fond mother assented with a sigh. His little covey of blue-eyed sisters had each taken one of his hands; Lady Elizabeth declared he was in a fever, and Jemima chid him for taking so little care of himself. The vivacity
with

with which he warded off their anxious attention would have succeeded, if he had not accidentally happened to cough more than once, which again renewed their observations. But not to alarm him by intimating their own fears, they confined them to silence till he and his two friends had retired to pursue their manly amusements; when looking after him as he shut the door, I do not like that boy's growing so fast, said the Earl.

I like his cough less, replied Lady Uxington: and to tell you the truth, my dear, the hectic colour in his face I do by no means think a favourable symptom.

Lady Elizabeth cried, Oh, mama, I hope you do not think there is any danger in these appearances. Jemima said something to the same purpose; and both grew pale at the idea.

No,

No, my loves, replied both parents in one breath, frightened at the sudden change on their complexions. Your brother, added Lord Uxington, I dare say will do well : now that we have found out the disease, we have only to apply the remedy.

And what is the remedy, papa ? where shall we find it ? eagerly asked Lady Jemima.

To-morrow, he replied, you both shall know it ; but I must consult Doctor Edgcomb before I tell you what I think will remove your brother's complaints.

And when does Doctor Edgcomb come ? said Lady Elizabeth, her voice sinking as she spoke.

We expect him this evening, my love, returned her mother : I wrote to
him

him on what occasion we wanted to see him, and am sure he will not disappoint us. So make yourselves easy and happy, my children; the plan in agitation will, I have no doubt, be productive of health to your brother, and of pleasure to us all. She spoke this with an air of certainty, and in a tone so cheerful, that though air and voice were the immediate coinage of the moment, on them it passed as the currency of truth, because they were too unskilled to discover that the heart had not milled it, nor sincerity stamped it with her image.

Doctor Edgcomb's appearance that evening at the Lodge was attended with the happiest consequences: he declared Lord Fitzhenry free from even a tendency to the disorder his father and mother apprehended he was falling into: he pronounced his Lordship's cough nothing, and his Lordship's hectic less than nothing; but did not
dissuade

dissuade the Earl and Countess from their intentions of going with his patient for a few months to a very fine seat they had in South Wales, before he was sent to pursue his studies at Oxford. The Doctor only assured them, that the design of nursing Lord Fitzhenry with goat whey, except there should happen to be a scarcity of all other fluids, would be quite unnecessary.

Novelty is full of charms for young people; and those at the Lodge who had never been in Wales since they were infants, bounded with delight at the idea of making an excursion to Mount Clear, which they remembered just well enough to fancy they should find it the most enchanting place in the world. Nor did their sanguine imaginations very much exaggerate its pretensions. Mount Clear, if not the most magnificent castle in South Wales, was decidedly the most advantageously situated

situated of any other. Fitzhenry, Elizabeth, and Jemima ransacked their memories in pursuit of every pleasant spot about it; and in the search all their infantine walks, gambols, and play-day frolicks presented themselves like old friends who were gladly recognized and affectionately talked over.

I should like to go with you but for one thing, said Frederic Wardour, who was a Cambrian. And why not? replied Fitzhenry: would Lord or Lady Wardour have any objection to receiving a visit from you by surprise? No, he was but too certain of their approbation; and the pleasure of shooting grouse with him at Northangle would overcome all difficulties, but that confounded one which now more than ever stood in his way. He looked at Lady Elizabeth: the weather was warm; Elizabeth threw off her little white felt hat, shook back the ringlets of her

abundant flaxen locks, and complained of the ugly glows to which she was subjected by heat so oppressive. The glow was indeed visible enough, but its ugly effects were not to be discovered. Poor Fred! cried Sir Valentine Willis, smiling archly, as if he had been in his confidence, and pitied him for something or other. The ugly glow increased on the fair cheeks of Lady Elizabeth, and poor Fred. ran out of the room.

Here was evidently a mystery—what could it be? Jemima, who had as yet nothing to do with *affaires de cœur* on her own account, thought she saw a little derangement in those of her neighbours; and would have sacrificed twenty better amusements to that of finding out the secret, which seemed only to exist between Mr. Wardour and Sir Valentine. However, this curiosity she silently suppressed for the present, because

because there did not appear to be any body that was much inclined to share it with her; Fitzhenry being engaged by his father in a conversation on books, tutors and colleges; Lady Uxington taken up in attending to them, and Elizabeth rather more inclined to think than to speak. But though suppressed, it was not annihilated; for she on the same instant resolved not to let Sir Valentine have any rest from her importunities, till he had told her what this mighty obstacle was that prevented his friend from going to his own country, when he had owned his father and mother would be so glad to see him there.

What could be expected from an attack made on the confidence of a boy of seventeen, by a lovely girl two years younger than himself? Nothing I am sure but what very naturally did happen. To possess beauty, riches, the finest
jewels,

jewels, or the finest equipages in the world, what gratification pray would all these trappings be to the fortunate owner, if there were not others besides herself to talk of, see, and admire them? Just so is a secret in the keeping of fifteen : to be then intrusted, carries an air of consequence ; but if fifteen keeps it shut up in her own reserve, it becomes a burthen of fatigue, rather than a weight of importance.

I could tell you something, brother, said Lady Jemima, if I durst. Why, what could you tell me, my little mad-cap? Oh, the most extraordinary history.—Is it your canary bird or your squirrel of which you would tell me the life and adventures? Her pride took the alarm. Very well, said she, nodding her pretty head; if you do not think I am old enough to talk with any body but birds and squirrels, I have done, Fitzhenry, and shall not think myself

myself intitled to the honour of entertaining your lordship till I am two or three inches taller. Why, you passionate dear vixen! calling her as she ran from him in pretended displeasure, come back and tell me all you know, or I'll not take one scamper with you up the mountains the whole time we are in Wales together. At this threat, more sensibly felt than any other would have been, she ran towards him, threw off the assumed mask of pique, and with all her native frankness and good humour assured him she was only in jest about her age, but very serious as to the secret which she longed to tell him; only she was afraid Sir Valentine would be angry if he should know that she had betrayed it. I have not yet, said she, mentioned it to any soul, except papa, mamma and Elizabeth, and neither of them will blab: but you may perhaps. Then you had better not trust me, Mima. Why, as to trusting you, brother,

brother, if you would only promise me not to jest with Mr Wardour about it, or look cunning as if you knew his reason for not choosing to go to Wales, I think I might trust you too, and Sir Valentine will never find it out, if you cry *mum*.—*Mum*, cried Lord Fitzhenry, and her little eager ladyship's scruples were all blown away.

Remember that *mum* is your promise not to speak a word of what I shall tell you. Sir Valentine Willis assures me, that there is a young person living near Lord and Lady Wardour, whom they design their son shall marry, and yet he does not like her: but what is the oddest thing of all, Sir Valentine has heard him say she is very handsome and very good—No, that is not the oddest thing of all neither, because it is still more odd that she has neither birth nor money, and yet Mr. Wardour's parents are so fond of the match,
that

that they are always teasing their poor son till he hates to go near them: at least Sir Valentine says so, and never will go when he can possibly help it.

Here the confidential conference broke up, or, to speak properly, was interrupted by the Earl and Countess coming up to them, with all the other members of their disjointed party, who had scattered themselves promiscuously in various parts of the garden.

Lord Fitzhenry did not give the artless, ill-concerted tale he had heard from his sister a second consideration; and would probably never have thought of it more, if Mr. Wardour had not himself drawn his attention that way, on the very day before a general separation took place, when some went one way, and some another; Lord Uxington having detained his son's visitors till

till the hour of his setting out with his family for Mount Clear.

Wardour came to the bed-side of Lord Fitzhenry before he was risen; I want, said he, to unburthen my mind to you, to tell you some things that vex me, and to conceal others that please me. On these terms have you the good nature to accept my confidence and the patience to listen whilst I relate my wayward situation?

Make your own terms, was the reply; only I desire you will not keep me long either in bed or in suspense.

Listen then, said his friend; for I have a great deal to tell you—I have said there is a cause why I cannot be of your party to my own country: I say too there is a cause for which I would lose a hand or an eye to be of your party; but that cause is what pleases myself

self, and I cannot divulge it : the other, which brings with it nothing but vexation, is at your service.—Fitzhenry only smiled, but did not interrupt him, and he continued : Would you believe that I have been an engaged man ever since I was six years old, and even before that, for any thing I know to the contrary ?

Then I protest, cried Fitzhenry, you have worn your shackles with more ease than any little gentleman of your inches that I have ever heard or read of : we have been six years at school together, and in the whole of that time you seemed to enjoy your perfect freedom.

But hear me, he replied, and without jesting on my too serious calamities ; how would you like, Fitzhenry, to be bred up all your life with a girl, to be told by Lord and Lady Uxington you are to marry her, that no other
woman

woman shall ever be your wife, when perhaps there is another — he paused—this is exactly my situation—How, I say, would you like to be in a similar predicament ?

'Faith, Wardour, I must hear more of the lady before I can answer that question. If my father and mother could choose better for me than I could for myself—if youth, beauty, wit, sentiment, good humour and affection were not left out of the bargain, I would undoubtedly take their recommendation—But if, on the other hand, the lady's virtues were all tied up in her money bags, and her disagreeables only exposed to view—if she were old, ugly, foolish, pert, a scold or a prude, should as certainly rather trust to my own judgment than to theirs in the choice of a wife.

Ah,

Ah, Fitzhenry! Miss Melmoth is all that you have been describing.

The devil she is! Then the case is hollow, my boy—But perhaps your partial imagination may have figured her worse than nature has made her.

We are east and west, Fitzhenry: I allude to your description of an amiable, you of an odious woman. No, no; on the score of personal or mental charms, in the choice my father and mother have made for me, I can find no excuse for my reluctance: all that can be said is, that I love another not so beautiful, perhaps in any eyes but my own not half so beautiful, as Miss Melmoth—more amiable she cannot be.—Yet for one I could lay down my life, with the other I could not make out a life even of comfort. I love her as a sister, but never can adore her as a wife.

Wardour,

Wardour, tell me more of this divine girl, if it is only to make me for the first time acquainted with your stupidity—Not marry such a celestial as Miss Melmoth, and sigh for a mere mortal! I hope you will be unsuccessful with the last, that you may be more just to the first.

One is possible, he replied: I may, it is extremely probable that I shall, be unsuccessful; but if you mean by *more just*, that I should transfer my passion from its present object to Miss Melmoth, your hope is a forlorn one. I have never yet spoken to either on the subject of love: when I meet the latter I am expected by my father and mother to lay my heart at her feet, and, till I am free from that engagement, I make no attempts to form any new one; though the silence honour forces me to preserve, is not purchased at a less price than the whole stock of
my

my most valuable feelings. You may now understand my reasons for not going with you into Wales—I am willing to defer that journey as long as I can—I have promised—I must perform—When I did promise, I had not seen the arbiters of my fate. I shall now, it is to be feared, whenever I enter upon my trial, make a ridiculous figure; for when I sue to be accepted, I shall wish to be refused: and it is from this motive that I put it off to the last moment; in hopes, chance, prior to our next meeting, may throw some less insensible being in her path, who may engage her affections before I am forced to solicit them. And yet that is a piece of good fortune not very likely to happen, nothing less than a miracle can effect it; for since she was brought into our neighbourhood, except my father, myself, her masters and male attendants, she has scarcely ever seen the face of any other man.

A very

A very odd circumstance! observed Lord Fitzhenry: it makes me suppose, that to all her other *agréments* abundant riches are added; or why all this caution to hide a jewel, in its own intrinsic worth so estimable?

Again you are mistaken, said War-dour; I do not know or believe that she has five hundred pounds which can be called her own property. She was, as I have heard my mother say, brought into the vicinity of Northangle, when only five weeks old, by her aunt Mrs. Melmoth, the most disagreeable woman you can conceive; but so highly accomplished by the refinements of education, and a perfect knowledge of almost every court in Europe, that the solitude, in which she has for so many years secluded her niece from the sight and society of the world, has been of little or no disadvantage to the information of Miss Melmoth's mind, or the
polish

polish of her manners—so well has instruction supplied the deficiency of experience.

Poh, poh ! never despair, cried Lord Fitzhenry : this is not the language of indifference ; it will all be as it should be—I now know exactly the state of your heart, better than you do, and will take it upon me to instruct you in its situation. You are in love, my friend ! the substance of that passion is Miss Melmoth - the other is a mere shadow which you have run after ; it has misled your senses, but your heart is altogether the property of Miss Melmoth. Time, said Wardour, will establish or confute your prophecy. To time I leave my destination—it must be my friend or my enemy in the extreme : at present I bequeath it to you—make a good use of it—get up, and come amongst us as soon as you can. He was going, but Lord Fitzhenry called him

him

him back : Tell me, said his Lordship, is it impossible for you to procure me a sight of Miss Melmoth ? I would take a great deal of pains to see her, for you have raised my curiosity to a pitch beyond my philosophy.

Would to God I could satisfy it !— Did she but know Fitzhenry, I should then have the most sanguine expectations for myself—No such good fortune lies in my path—all that I can, I will do—I will give you an introduction to my father and mother, if you should be inclined to be the bearer of it through thirty miles of not the best roads in the world : they will be honoured and flattered with your visit, but I cannot promise that they will let you see Miss Melmoth ; for the moment any man but myself comes into the neighbourhood, she immediately disappears, and is invisible till the coast is again cleared.—Your figure and rank,
I fear,

I fear, will not be the means that any exceptions should be made in your favour.

I shall thank you, eagerly cried Fitzhenry, for a letter to your family, the rest I will trust to chance and my own endeavours.—You shall have it, replied Wardour, and again he was going.

Pr'ythee, stay a moment longer, Frederick, and tell me one thing more, which till now I had forgotten to ask you. Since Miss Melmoth is neither of birth nor fortune equal to your own, what can be the motive of Lord and Lady Wardour, that you think they will push the match even against your inclinations?

I know of no other, said he, but the beauty of her person, the elegance of her mind, the sweetness of her disposition, and that she is a *bonne catholique*,

to which Miss Melmoth's aunt is quite as great a bigot as my good father and mother themselves. I have escaped the rage of enthusiasm, and my refractory heart, which shuts itself against the charms of a *bonne catholique*, expands to receive the beloved image of a lovely protestant. He stayed to say no more, but ran off, bidding Fitzhenry make haste and come to breakfast : nor was the conversation again renewed, till the moment before the visited and the visitors were separating for their different pursuits ; when Wardour, putting the letter he had written to his father slyly into the hand of Lord Fitzhenry, sighed, and wished him success.

His Lordship had passed six weeks at Mount Clear in all the various joys of festive hospitality, which he began to suppose would have no end but with their residence in that country ; their house being an exact representation of
a fashionable

a fashionable watering-place, where there is only one table to accommodate all descriptions of visitors. And the change was so rapid from one party to another, whole families anxiously waiting to supply the first vacancy at Mount Clear; so many new walking, riding, musical and dancing projects formed from day to day; that Lord Fitzhenry had no time to think of his friend Wardour, his letter, or his mistress.

Only six weeks more remained to fill up the measure of the three months allotted to the pleasures of their excursion to Wales. By mere accident, Wardour's letter to his father happened to attract the notice of Fitzhenry as he looked in his pocket-book for something else. It was then very natural that he should think of Wardour—He did think of him; nor was Miss Melmoth any longer a stranger to his thoughts. With her image his curiosity revived; and

blushing that he had hitherto been so dilatory in executing the commission of his friend, on the self-same day he asked and obtained permission from Lord Uxington to make an equestrian tour, attended only by his groom, through some of the most celebrated northern counties. He said he had once hinted his intentions to Frederic Wardour, who, in case he should pursue them, had given him a letter of introduction to his family; so that he should certainly call before he returned again, to see Lord Wardour's place, having heard that Northangle was intitled to the observation of travellers by the proud pre-eminence of its situation, and its vicinity to the sea. All this Lord Fitzhenry said to his father, mother, and sisters, as a reason for his elopement, but he did not say a word of Miss Melmoth.

Frederic

Frederic had told him the road from Mount Clear to Northangle was bad ; but the month being August, the weather fine, and himself in high spirits, his Lordship did not find them half so bad as he expected. Good or bad, he measured it in four hours, and got to Northangle when Lord Wardour's family were set down to dinner. He was shocked to introduce himself at an hour so unseasonable for every thing but his appetite to eat, and his impatience to see Miss Melmoth—to judge for himself if she was really so handsome as Wardour represented her—choosing to forget the impracticability of obtaining even the shortest interview with that retired lady. Doubly shocked at the thoughts of making his first *entée* in absolute *deshabille*, his hair out of powder, and the dirt of thirty miles fast riding on his boots—ah, how was poor Fitzhenry disheartened!—He had looked himself, and made his groom look every where
about

about them for an inn or an hovel where he might retire to make his toilet, but no such convenient recess was any where to be found : there were only two houses in view, one of which, from the magnificence of its structure, he rightly supposed to be Northangle ; and the other, from its being imbosomed in wood, through which it seemed to peep as if afraid to be seen, he as truly concluded must be the secluded habitation of Mrs. Melmoth and her niece. In this distress what could be done ? It began to rain hard : shelter must be found—yet where find it except at one or other of the houses in view ?

After a great deal of consideration on the extreme awkwardness of his situation, he ordered his groom to go forward, himself keeping out of sight, and enquire at Lord Wardour's from some of the servants for the nearest inn, and to take a plain direction how they

they should find it out; for, amongst all his disasters, that of neither understanding nor being understood by any of the peasants whom he had stopped, and to whom he had addressed a multitude of questions, was by no means the smallest.

When we send a courier *extraordinary*, and are eager for the return of our dispatches, we are more apt to look in the messenger's face for the message he brings, than to wait till his tongue has delivered it. In the cleared up countenance of his groom Lord Fitzhenry saw a great deal of unknown good fortune; which being construed into language, amounted to a very pressing invitation from the Lord of Northangle, that his intended guest would do him the honour to alight at his door without further ceremony—a message his Lordship dispatched by one of his own servants, with orders to carry it himself
to

to Lord Fitzhenry, whom the swilled groom had taken the liberty to announce without permission, and now offered to convey Lord Wardour's invitation to his master; and as it still rained fast, the well-powdered footman was glad to accept of his civil proposal.

Fitzhenry had too much good sense and politeness to keep the family in a state of expectation, particularly as his groom had told him that he saw dinner carrying up as the hall-door was opened to his knock, not seeing any other way into the house. His Lordship therefore quickened his pace; for which manœuvre he had many reasons, one of which was, that his long ride had sharpened his appetite, and, not yet being in love, he always found it very agreeable to eat when he was hungry.

The spot on which he had waited for the return of his groom was under the
umbrage

umbrage of a spreading oak, which sheltered him from the large heavy drops that fell upon its thick foliage, and sounded as they fell:—here too he heard the message sent to him by Lord Wardour, and what the groom had observed about dinner's going up as he stood at the hall-door; all of which intelligence put together, besides the time taken up to go a hundred yards further to reach the gates through which he was to pass into the pleasure-grounds, made up in the whole the capital sum of at least twelve minutes; and in five more he had galloped up the avenue, just as a neat post-chaise drove up to the door of the house, and two female figures had appeared on the top of the steps, as if descending to enter it, with each an umbrella held over her head, and one of them conducted by a gentleman who walked by her side, and, by being uncovered, shewed he was not of the retreating party.—It must be Lord

Wardour, thought Fitzhenry, and the ladies he escorts Mrs. and Miss Melmoth:—again he guessed right. Nor did they do any more by running away from his Lordship when they heard he was coming, than it was their custom to do from all the men who visited at Northangle, whether they came expected or by surprise. And, strange as it may appear, for the purpose of an expeditious flight, Mrs. Melmoth's horses, whenever she visited her neighbours, were always in harness.

Fitzhenry had no sooner let himself into the light of this mystery, than he resolved to forfeit his pretensions to politeness by rudely obtruding upon strangers who wished to shun him, rather than lose the only probable opportunity he might ever meet with of satisfying his curiosity:—premeditation was not his perfection, but impetuosity was often his error. At this crisis he was resigned
to

to its impulse; and dismounting before those he was going to meet had even seen his approach, he flew toward them just as the ladies had descended from the last step, and presented his hand to—
—an angel.

Contrary to Fitzhenry's expectation, Miss Melmoth did not receive his offered assistance with that sort of *mauvaise honte* natural to the solitude and seclusion in which she had been brought up, but with all the smiling *naïveté* of conscious modesty, and a certain air of *nonchalance*, by which the circles of a court are distinguished: she was much less embarrassed than himself; she thanked and wished him a good morning—he could not utter a syllable.

Lord Wardour, by performing the same office to the aunt as his newly arrived guest had been doing to the niece, saw him not till he had put Miss Melmoth

moth into the carriage, and even then started to find at his side one of the finest young men his eyes had ever beheld. But instantaneously he recovered from his surprise, which might be also a little tinged with vexation that his favourite had seen and been seen by such a man. His Lordship gave Fitzhenry a welcome so polite and hospitable as he would not have been insensible to at any other moment of his life, but he had drawn upon him for attention at the instant when Miss Melmoth had left him a bankrupt in that article, and his *petites étourderies* were for ever announcing the deficiency.

Lady Wardour was one of the most amiable of women—her Lord not the most unamiable of men: and when informed by the letter he delivered them from their son, that Fitzhenry was the dearest of his friends—that he wrote from the country seat of Lord Uxington,

ton, who did him the honour to consider him as a part of his family—the admiration they had before entertained for their guest was changed to esteem, and soon after converted into something like that sort of affection they felt for their beloved, their only and their most deserving son. Fitzhenry had the best heart in the world: he was grateful for their caresses, but their caresses did not content him: nothing indeed could have contented him, except to have seen once more her whom, if he had been governed by wisdom, situated as she was, he should never have wished to see again.

Four days he had been at North-angle, and the name of Melmoth in all that time never once escaped the lips of Lord or Lady Wardour: he accused them of reserve, of ill-nature, of jealousy, of contracted hearts, and resolved he would stay no longer. He told
them

them he should return to Mount Clear the day following; yet when they entreated him not to leave them so soon, he yielded up to their entreaties, because there was yet a possibility that, if he staid, chance or design might be favourable to the dearest of his wishes—if he went away, the thing was impossible.—How can you, said he to Lady Wardour, sacrifice to your politeness for me so much of your time as you have the goodness to do? You bid me stay where I am, yet I am convinced more and more, that I am troublesome, that I am a restraint on your usual rational amusements—You stay at home with me, you consult nothing but my gratification.

What shall I do to convince you that you are not troublesome? replied her Ladyship, with a good humoured smile, as if she had penetrated the drift of his professed repugnance; what is there
that

that my Lord and I can say to assure you of the desire we have to detain you, and the sincere regret with which we shall part from you, whenever you do leave us?

My dear Madam! cried Fitzhenry, electrified by the expression of her countenance, I could be no where so happy as with yourself and Lord Wardour, to whose goodness I am infinitely indebted: there is no family in the world with whom I could be so much at home, if you would make me of less consequence, and not confine all your favours to myself. You neither walk, ride, call on your neighbours, receive or pay visits; I am, I know I am, an obstruction to all your pleasures. Your Ladyship has only to do as you would have done, if I had not the honour to be your visitor, then I shall indeed think I am no intruder. Will you not, charming Lady Wardour, command me
to

to attend you on your morning excursions? will you not take me on your hand, and present me to your neighbours, that I may not incur their hate for engrossing so much of your time and keeping them from your society?

I have few very near neighbours, replied her Ladyship, looking archly; yet if I understand you right, the two ladies whom you saw by accident you wish to see again—Lord Fitzhenry coloured—Nay, continued she, it is a very natural curiosity: no doubt my son has let you a little into his secret, and I should have no objection in the world to your seeing his wife elect, provided I could prevail on Mrs. Melmoth to receive a stranger at her house, or to bring her niece here. We will see what is to be done, added she: I will myself be the voucher for your honour, that you will not try to rival your friend,

friend, and your candour shall be my counter security.

Never, never, said the ardent Fitzhenry, shall this generous confidence be abused ; you are right, madam, in supposing I am not unacquainted with your son's engagements ; and where he has pretensions, I would die rather than invade them.

I am perfectly satisfied, my Lord, therefore say no more, replied Lady Wardour : and the next day she told him she expected Mrs. Melmoth and her niece to dinner.

Where *he* has pretensions I would rather die than invade them, said Lord Fitzhenry. The language was not more strong, than the profession was sincere ; but had Lady Wardour, to whom it was addressed, known the conversation which passed between the two young
men

men before they separated at Uxington Lodge, she would have seen a subterfuge lurking behind these words, which the reader, who is better acquainted with what were her son's *pretensions*, must have already found out ; and if discovered by her ladyship, she might not so unguardedly have fallen in with the views of her young favourite.

Lord Fitzhenry, who seemed at his first transient glance of Miss Melmoth to have lost his senses, had certainly regained them by the time he saw her again ; for at this second meeting the happy *retenué* conspicuous in his air, his voice, his address, and the whole of his fascinating manner, would have conveyed to Suspicion herself no food for observation, no picture of a heart at variance with its own feelings, no hopeless *pensant* hid beneath the *je ne sçai q.oi* of exteriors so lively, so gay, so unembarrassed.

Lord

Lord Fitzhenry with indefatigable pains, and by a host of prudent resolves, had stopped all communication that under a less rigid guard might have passed between his heart and his countenance. Lady Wardour presented him to Mrs. Melmoth and her beautiful appendage;—his caution did not relax, though his susceptible soul was besieged by a thousand various emotions, which he found it exceedingly difficult to conquer: but when conquered, the hard victory, he thus gained, obtained for him more than the glories of a civic crown, the approbation of Mrs. Melmoth, and an invitation to her house. The part of indifference he had chosen was wonderfully well supported; it was neither over nor under acted, but that fortunate medium preserved, which fully established him in the confidence of both families: and that friendship with Frederic, which had been his passport to the warm regards of Lord and Lady Wardour,

Wardour, procured him also the distinction of being honoured with something more than civil notice by Mrs. Melmoth.

I would not have my reader suppose, from the single *trait* of caution in the conduct of Lord Fitzhenry, that his mind harboured under a mask of indifference sentiments he would have blushed to avow, or that his character was marked with deceit. No! Lord Fitzhenry's soul was the soul of honour; —from the moment he saw Miss Melmoth, he wished to see her again, he wished to see no other object but herself; and how was honour offended? which of her rigid sons would have unhumanized himself, to boast, with a heart unoccupied before he beheld Miss Melmoth, that he could behold her with impunity? If this charge is brought against Frederic Wardour, let it be considered as an extenuation of his offence against taste, and

and against judgment, that the most beautiful productions of nature will be examined coldly, perhaps, with apathy, by the eye which has no relief, no other object to fix on. It was exactly his own case: he had seen her a pretty infant, a lovely girl, and the handsomest woman in the world; but the transitions had been all so immediately under his own observation, and the expansion of her beauties so gradual, that the charm of surprise was wanting to give them effect. Just so would it be with ourselves, if we were to take our station by the side of a flower, and there fix till we had watched it through all its gradations: a rose for instance we should admire it in the early bud; the bud increases we do not know how, we still regard it with the same degree of pleasure, we still admire it; and when we have seen it full blown, what do we more than admire it?

Lord

Lord Fitzhenry thought it impossible, however fantastically the inclinations of his friend might be disposed of at present, that, when he returned to Wales, he should not feel exactly as he himself felt in the presence of Miss Melmoth, in whose person were realized all the feminine graces of ease, proportion, and delicacy; whose features were an assemblage of charms, softened by every interesting, and animated by every enlivening expression, that could be thrown into them by virtuous sensibility; a first rate understanding, lively imagination, and spirits unbroken by disappointments—Not love! not adore Miss Melmoth! Ah Wardour! the moment you see her again your senses will develop themselves, and you will no longer tell me you do not love her—This was the idea formed by Fitzhenry, who, whilst disguising his sentiments to the friends of Miss Melmoth, from Miss Melmoth's own observation still more
carefully

carefully concealed them. He forced himself to consider her as affianced to another, and never ventured to look or speak in any language more strongly marked, than he might with propriety have addressed to her, had she already been the wife of Wardour.

Lord Fitzhenry had written to his family from Northangle more than once, in the happy or miserable—for I do not know which the fortnight he passed at Lord Wardour's deserves to be called: if it was happiness, he did not enjoy it; if it was misery, he could not tear himself from it: He wished he had never seen Miss Melmoth, when with her: when absent, he measured moments by ages till he was to see her again; for now a day never elapsed that did not bring them together. At length arrived the hour of separation: it was to Fitzhenry the hour of torture; but his manly spirit bore him through the excruciating

cruciating conflict with resolution that did him honour, and endeared his memory to those whom he left behind him. Once indeed the laurels he had so hardly earned were in danger of falling to the ground, though it was only himself who saw the error he might have committed, and saw in time to retrieve it—it was in the weakest of those moments to which he had been exposed, it was when Lord Wardour said to him just as he was going to mount his horse—When you see my son, have the goodness to tell him, my dear Lord, what you think of his angel; and if you do us the honour to sanction their nuptials with your presence, our measure of felicity though on that event moderately full, your participation of our joy must be an addition that will make it run over.

His angel!—Wardour's angel!—their nuptials!—these were words that stopped in the throat of Lord Fitzhenry,

ry, but he gulped them down, took a hasty, polite, affectionate leave of his kind entertainers, left his compliments for their neighbours at High Hill, and galloped off, with his body to rejoin his family, leaving his heart behind him.

There were many ostensible causes why he did not get to Mount Clear till eight o'clock in the evening. It is true he *galloped* away from the door of Lord Wardour—perhaps for fear that, if he did not use speed, the sounds of *angel*, and *nuptials*, might overtake him—It is also true, that he lost no time in firing eyeshot as he passed within sight of certain windows, where, if he had ventured to look up, it is probable he might have caught a parting glance from the divinity, whose looks he now dreaded, rather than wished to encounter : but though he galloped, and better than galloped, for more than a mile after he had lost all traces of High Hill,

yet he did not get the sooner to his father's house; for when once he had cleared the dangerous coast, where words terrific to his ears, and temptations ambushed in beauty threatened to assail him, then he resigned himself to meditation, and his motions to the will of his horse, who perhaps might also have left behind him something, if only good hay and corn, to regret, so followed his master's example, and with the reins loose on his handsome shoulders, shewed his inclinations rather to meditate than to labour, by the difference of time in their journey from Mount Clear to Northangle, and in their return from Northangle to Mount Clear, one being lightly performed in four hours, the other heavily executed in seven.

Tired of dreaming to no purpose, and grieving to no end, Lord Fitzhenry was not sorry to be saluted with the
found

sound of fiddles as he entered the saloon. His father and mother received him with their accustomed joy, and his lovely sisters quitted their partners in the dance, to run and throw themselves into his arms—He was taken by surprise, gaiety knocked at the door of his heart, he bid it enter, shook off *ennui*, his dust and his fatigue, got rid of his boots, and made a very respectable figure in the annals of this pleasant ball domestic.

Amongst the present set of visitors, whose turn it now was to enliven the society of Mount Clear, there were many pretty faces, but none that Fitzhenry had ever seen before, and not one who could for a moment make him forget Miss Melmoth ; yet he danced with them all, he liked them all, and he pleased them all—The earl and Countess, though their fears of his going into a decline had long been silenced, would

not permit him to overheat himself after so long a ride; which broke up the party at an early hour, with a promise that they should assemble themselves as early as they pleased the next evening.

The only personages destined to be distinguished amongst the visitors at Mount Clear, by a particular description, are a Lady Owen, widow of Sir Ogle Owen, knight; and Miss Clarinda Owen, her daughter, the heiress of a very large fortune, acquired by trade, and kept together by parsimony—not by female parsimony, for the ladies of Sir Ogle's family were more inclined to squander than to save; but Sir Ogle himself was a great œconomist, and as long as he lived obliged his wife and daughter to adopt his modes, though they could not be prevailed on to adopt his opinion, that to save a pound was better than spending a hundred. Lady
Owen

Owen always loved a bit of a flash, though she could not always indulge her passion for show till Sir Ogle had crossed the river Styx; and she loved to cut somewhat of a figure, being both for figure and flash perfectly qualified, and as highly finished in that way as any planter's wife could be, whose husband by slave-buying and slave-whipping had amassed in one heavy lump the enormous sum of two hundred thousand pounds. Three years before we find them at Mount Clear, Mr. Ogle beginning to lose a little of his importance in the Island of St. Kitts, by an unlucky blow bestowed on a dying negro, which it is supposed rather hastened his journey into the other world; and some observations being made, not advantageous to the planter's humanity; Mrs. Ogle persuaded him that the best method to get rid of the odium which now stuck to his name, would be to cover it with a bit of a title; for which purpose he
came

came with his family to England, and, by advancing a critical loan of twenty thousand to a great man in great necessity, the deed was done; and one day leaving his wife at home plain Mrs. Owen, he went no farther than St. James's, when soon coming back again he had the honour of saluting her *ladyship*, and of congratulating himself *Sir Ogle* as the fountain of her new dignity. Miss Clarinda was immediately conveyed to one of the first boarding schools, with many charges from her mama not to mix with any but quality young Ladies; for now that her papa was a Sir, and her mama a Ladyship, with more money than they knew what to do with, she was a fool if she did not think herself as good as the best of them, and hold up her head with any duke's daughter in the land. Miss, exceedingly docile at imbibing this sort of lectures, and at an age most likely to retain them, having just entered her
sixteenth

sixteenth year, promised she would not disgrace her family, or let herself down, by taking notice of girls who were not as great and as rich as herself. Every thing now wore quite another face at the planter's, whose ideas expanded in proportion to his rank: magnificence stood at the door, and splendour looked out at the window; my Lady's carriage, before her Ladyship was ready to enter it, rolled in imitation of its betters, hour after hour, up the street and down the street, and not one observation dropped from the great man's lips, that the wheels were wearing out to no purpose. My Lady's porter wore his woolly hair fully powdered, which afforded a good contrast to the jet black of his complexion—his laced livery and broken English, combined very much to engage the attention of all the enquirers after her Ladyship's health. One of my Lady's footmen was also of the same sable hue, because my Lady thought
black

black was a much more grander colour than white; and because Sir Ogle never approved of paying wages, when he had slaves whose duty it was to serve him for nothing. No sooner was the great man established in all his greatness, than one greater than himself courted his acquaintance. Hitherto he passed the door, as if he thought plain Mr. Owen not worthy his notice: but now that he was Sir Ogle, being himself not only of a hungry disposition, but ambitious of keeping the best company, though he had been two or three times denied entrance, by a certain set of scientific gentlemen, who are his professed enemies, and leagued together to keep him out of every house where they visit, as long as they can; yet one day when he called and found them all napping, he not only made good his entrance, but when he went out again, much against the inclinations of Sir Ogle, and apparently against the will
of

of his Lady, he carried the poor knight away with him—his name was Death!

The widowed Lady did all that a widowed Lady could do, to shew her respect to the memory of so good and so great a man; she enquired what ladies of rank do on these heart-breaking occasions, and did exactly the same; she saw no body for the first fortnight, but the young heiress and her own black female attendant; she put on the handsomest mourning--a Duchess might have worn such weeds, with pleasure; she shed as many tears as any other lady in her situation would have shed. Her porter had his message to deliver, that his lady was as well as could be expected; but the poor fellow, who could not so readily pronounce Lady, thought it just as well to give her the same appellation he had so many years been used to, and called her his Misses, instead of his Lady: which omission being conveyed to her

Ladyship's ears, the unfortunate Mungo was instantly disgraced, and the informer rewarded with his post, as a gratification for the care with which he had watched over her dignity, when she was too much afflicted to support it properly herself. Besides her mourning—her tears—and her general messages—there were many other forms equally attended to: indeed there was not one omitted, for which a jury of widows could have brought in a verdict in her disfavour. The only pleasure she suffered her poor heart to solace in, from the day of Sir Ogle's death till full six months were completed, was in forming her daughter's mind to her situation; till she had actually made the balance, even to a hair, between the young lady's vanity and her riches. Miss Clarinda did not like school confinement; and how was it to be supposed that a young Lady, heiress to ten score thousand pounds, should like it? Besides,

Besides, Miss Clarinda was really an indolent gawky sort of beauty, tall, fair, blue eyes, and did not want school learning to teach her the use of them—besides, again, she had made coquetting her study, under her mamma's own instruction, three years before she was brought to England for the finishing stroke to be put to her education, and to see her papa knighted, and her mamma made into a Lady. She had in her own native island been told by many fashionable heroes of the quarter deck, who frequently dined at her papa's table, that she was an angel; and angels are more proper to instruct others; than to be instructed themselves: she therefore took upon her to correct her mamma's little inaccuracies in manners and language, and with scorn rejected the idea of returning to Queen-square. Of private masters she condescended to admit the attendance, and the house was full of them, though
to

to very little purpose ; for if the heiress chose to dispose of herself any other way, which pretty constantly was the case, they were paid, dismissed, and desired to come again when she was more at leisure.

The widow's weeds folded up, and the widow's tears dried up, nothing hindered them from being exposed to the world's view, like any other widow, and any other heiress. Assemblies, suppers, and Sunday concerts, at which Miss Owen languished, and performed most killingly, filled their house as soon as the doors were open—But with what was it filled?—why with a great deal of good company ; for good company will always run after good cheer : and the great man, whom in his greater necessities Sir Ogle had obliged with a very great loan, rather chose to pay compliments, than interest money ; so brought all the ladies of his own family,
and

and all of any other body's family, whom he could make subservient to his purpose, to visit, and receive visits, from Lady and Miss Owen: he would even have done more, he would with all his soul have married either of them, if he had not been already provided with one wife more than he cared for.

Lady Uxington, in the course of her town visits, had more than once happened to meet Lady Owen and her daughter. The latter had something in her externals rather prepossessing, for which she was partly indebted to nature, and partly to disguise: Lady Uxington admired the softness of her voice and manner, invited Miss Owen to sit near her, and honoured her with a great deal of notice; but the comely coarseness of countenance, and vulgar though sycophant approaches of the mother, deterred her from forming any acquaintance with the family. However, she
had

had been civil to them, and that, together with her being a Countess, was enough to make them distractedly fond of her Ladyship. This sketch of the Owens wants only the *dénouement*, which is also to account for their being at Mount Clear, when Lord Fitzhenry returned with a thorn in his heart, from his excursion to Northangle.—The noble debtor of Lady Owen's late husband, now the debtor of her daughter, had a house not ten miles from Mount Clear; and with much entreaty the Lady of this house had been prevailed on to give her Lord's fair creditor, and her mother an invitation to spend part of the summer with them: a civility far more readily accepted, than it had been offered. The arrival of Lord Uxington's family in that country, from whence they had been absent so many years, was quite an event: and amongst all the other families who came to congratulate them, was that to which was
annexed

A NOVEL.

annexed my Lady Owen, and my Lady Owen's daughter: Lady Uxington visited the family in town, she could not refuse to receive them in the country, and they all preceded Lord Fitzhenry by one day only.

The cunning eyes of Lady Owen twinkled with an expression of more than joy, it was well mixed up with design, when it came to the turn of Fitzhenry to dance with fair Clarinda; and by some chance or other, for on one part at least it was not done with design, when they sat down to supper, he happened to place himself between mamma and miss. Mamma had hitherto been almost entirely silent, and conducted herself with a great deal of quality reserve, by the advice of Clarinda, who always dreaded, when she opened her mouth, what she was going to say; but on so transporting a manœuvre as that which brought his Lordship into
this

this close family contact, the sluices of caution were burst open, and out rushed such torrents of nonsensical vulgarity, as would have overwhelmed any man on whom it had fallen, if, like the partner of Miss Owen, he had not been a greater admirer of Nature's oddities, than of Affectation's most finished productions. Accident had fixed him in a central situation between the extremes—and, whilst with the gravest attention he listened to the one, and with the most captivating encouragement returned the glances of the other, he found himself so much amused, so wonderfully entertained, that he forgot Northangle, High-hill, the Wardours, the Melmoths, every thing animate and inanimate, but Lady and Miss Owen.

Don't say that no more, Miss Owen!
—Miss Owen had just observed how much pleasanter such little select friendly parties were than stuck out entertain-

ments—Don't say that no more, child ! for 'tis paying my Lord no compliment for his Lordship's obliging company.—I should be glad for to know what was the difference yesterday before my Lord came home—I'm sure there was no life nor spirit amongst us.—Young gentlemen *is* always the life and soul of the company ; as I used to tell poor dear Sir Ogle, when he was *afear'd*, that every Lord, that did but look at Miss Owen, was going to run away with her ; and your Lordship knows too much of the world, not to suppose that these things did not happen often enough.—Young ladies who have two hundred thousand pounds all out at five per cent, and well secured with some of the best nobles in the land, must expect to be looked at, if it was only for their money.

But Miss Owen, madam, seems to possess two hundred thousand personal charms,

charms, which, in my opinion, are of infinitely greater value.

Well, then, since your Lordship is so very obliging, suppose you lump them together, and then—

For Heaven's sake! interrupting her mother, what are you going to say, madam? Stop, I beseech you, or you will drive me out of the room.

How can you be so unpolite, Miss Owen, to make such a fuss about nothing? Suppose I had a mind to joke with his Lordship, he is too polite by half not to know jest from earnest.

Lord Fitzhenry bowed his thanks, but did not speak—speaking was out of the question—if he had spoke, he must have laughed, and a laugh would have spoiled all his sport.

And

And if I had said, Lump them together, and then take them both; who but yourself, Miss Owen, could take it into their head, that Lady Owen was offering the daughter of Sir Ogle Owen, an heiress of two hundred thousand pounds, any otherwise than in a jest? No! no! Miss Owen, I know your dignity better than that comes to; whoever has Miss Owen must ax and not be axed the question.

Fitzhenry saw the fair face of Clarinda inflamed with rage and mortification. Sorry, therefore, that he had been the innocent means of creating family animosities, he contrived to soften the one, and entirely conquer the other, by saying with a sigh, which, though it did not come from his own heart, found its way to the very core of Miss Owen's heart—Ah! Lady Owen, there will be so many to *ask*, and only one that *can* have—

There

There was such a pathos in the lengthened *Ab*, and such a diffident hint of his own success, if he was to try it, implied in these few words, as covered the now delighted countenance of the young lady with blushes, which were so eager to shew themselves, that they actually pushed through the delicate veil of rouge, that vainly tried to obscure a crimson more bright than its own. A responsive sigh answered to the sigh of his Lordship, and the tenderest look in the world was dispatched from her languishing blue eyes on a message so full, as left no room for despair, where despair was not the predetermined choice of him to whom it was delivered. But what were the emotions of Miss Owen at hearing a sigh, an exclamation, and a tender insinuation from the lips of a Lord, such a Lord as Fitzhenry—what were they in comparison of the distracted emotions
of

of gratified vanity, in the ample bosom of Lady Owen herself?

Well, my Lord, cried she, we will, if your Lordship can have a little patience to wait, talk no more now of that there thing about axing or being axed; because Miss Owen is very delicate, as she ought to be, considering her fortune, and the polite education I have given her. Poor dear Sir Ogle, her father, had no ideas about young ladies:—He, good man as he was—and all the world knows that he was a good man, by the great wealth he left to his family—yet he had no more notion of education and politeness, than if he had been a plebeian his ownself, though I assure your Lordship, whoever marries Miss Owen need never desire for to mix with no better families.

Lord Fitzhenry was choking; he called for a glass of wine—And give me another,

another, sir, if you please, said Lady Owen, that his Lordship and I may hob nob.—Miss Owen, will you join us? Come, come, don't be low spirited! (For Miss Owen did really look as if she was sinking under the weight of her mother's folly.)—I hate to see young ladies low spirited, when they may buy what they please, do what they please, and have nothing for to do but to please themselves in all manner of ways.

This was more than his Lordship was able to bear; and, before the wine could be filled, he moved himself off as if to speak to Lady Elizabeth, who sat on the same side: and when she said something to him, as he leaned over the back of her chair, in her usual soft mild tone of voice, he laughed so immoderately, that she thought he must be gone quite distracted—She could have no idea of
the

the real cause of his mirth; for amongst all Lady Owen's natural graces that of a loud voice was not numbered. She had never dared to lift it in Sir Ogle's life-time above a whining note; and habit in her was become a second nature—so that no part of her conversation ever transpired further than the person or persons to whom it was addressed. Had not this been the case, it is probable that Lord Fitzhenry would not have drawn her out to amuse him, at the expence of being joined in the ridicule she must so generally have attracted.

Lady Uxington, at no time an encourager of late hours, on account of her daughters, who were too young to partake of them with propriety, and too old to be sent to their nursery before the family separated, had placed a clock over the mantle-piece, which struck the quarters, and always made a
move

move to retire at half an hour after eleven.—But this evening, some lady, who sat next to her, having entered on a long history about herself, in which she seemed mightily interested, Lady Uxington did not think it quite civil to interrupt her; and before the gossiping tale could be brought to any sort of conclusion, the third quarter after eleven had been announced. Though Fitzhenry returned to his post, he was grown tired of his duty; and often reminded his mother, by looking at her and then at the clock, how glad he should be of a reprieve. At length the tale was finished—the tapers lighted—and every one went their own way.

It is the darkest sky that emits the brightest flashes; and Lord Fitzhenry's spirits, on his arrival at Mount Clear, were entirely the flashes of a mind determined to conquer its own gloom. When he got to his chamber, and had
no

no resource but to his solitary reflections, the image of Miss Melmoth in all her loveliness stole upon his imagination, and made him almost wish he was again by the side of Lady Owen; whose extreme ignorance, and incessant flow of words, had been an effectual charm against the torture of close thinking.—What would thought produce? What did it produce but a desperate certainty that he never could be the husband of Miss Melmoth? And this certainty once established, was formally announced to Frederic Wardour in the following letter, begun and ended before he joined his family the next morning at breakfast.

LETTER.

“ I do not write to upbraid you, Frederic, for having led me into a temptation, without shewing me the

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way

way how to escape out of it; nor to tell you I am in love, nor how I like your family, your place, or your neighbours—but to congratulate you on being the most fortunate of mankind.—Not love Miss Melmoth! If I thought you meant to deceive me—but, no—I have a better opinion of your honesty—it is your own heart that has deceived you.—Did I not tell you this before I had ever seen Miss Melmoth? and now that I have seen her, do you think I am likely to change my opinion?—Not love her! not adore her!—Do not flatter any other woman upon earth, with the idea that she has a share in your affections—it would be ungenerous; because she may be more credulous than I am, and repay them with her own. You would then, too late for justice, and for happiness, find out that you have been mistaken, and that it is impossible you should love, as a wife ought to be loved, any other woman

woman than Miss Melmoth.—Be not jealous—I am too unconcealed to be dangerous—I tell you frankly that, to be in your situation with Miss Melmoth, I would forfeit every thing but my honour; and it is that which will secure me from declaring myself your rival—If there wanted a collateral cause to guard me against myself, I should seek for it in the beautiful eyes of Miss Melmoth—She loves you, Wardour; and they sparkle with joy, or fill with tears, whenever I talk to her of you.

“ Your father and mother are charming people—I am much indebted to them—their whole souls are in your union with Miss Melmoth—You must not suffer yourself any longer to be misled by an *ignis fatuus* of the brain—you must not disappoint them, and, in doing so, make yourself eventually miserable.—I will be the guardian of your happiness, and my own shall be

the sacrifice : I will force you to feel and to confess that all perfection of soul and form is centred in Miss Melmoth.

“ My God! what parents are yours, Wardour! I think my own better than any body’s else : and yet I have my doubts, if such a dear, portionless charmer, portionless of all but the richest gifts of Heaven and Nature, had been thrown into the neighbourhood of Mount Clear or Uxington Lodge—I have my doubts, if, like Lord and Lady Wardour, they would have been so tenacious of my felicity, as to wear the jewel in their own bosoms, till I had come of age to be trusted with the rich deposit, and then to have transferred it to mine.—Yet I think they would, if they had ever seen Miss Melmoth—But then she must have been a protestant—my father will never consent to a union for any of his children, where there is not a coincidence of opinion on these
serious

serious subjects. — Forgive me, and forgive him, my dear Wardour ! I have too just a reliance on your liberality to fear that you will accuse me of wanting it, in the free confession I have ventured to make you : if my father's fixed resolve on this single point deserves to be called prejudice, I will give you a reason for it, that shall in some degree soften the asperity of a charge, so much, in general, against the heart and against the understanding.

“ My father had one, and only one sister—She was the darling of her family—she married a catholic—She has been a miserable wife, and her constitution is so much impaired by trouble, that she goes about from one salutary climate to another, but carries her torment with her ; and we have no hopes she will ever get better. She has been a mother—fortunately her infant died soon after its birth—had it lived, her afflictions would

would have been considerably increased. —My father adores this unfortunate sister—can you not then allow some indulgence to his prejudices?—I will tell you more of these circumstances when we meet—Adieu ! know your own happiness—the rapture of bliss is only to be found in the preference of Miss Melmoth—I must content myself with second-rate blessings—here are some pretty faces in this country, and I look at them *pour tuer le tems*.—One of them has a large fortune annexed to it, but where is the soul of Miss Melmoth?—I encourage my sad heart to be gay, and will flirt with them all to keep it from breaking.—I wish, Wardour, I could shew you my Clarinda and her mamma. —Oh what a difference in women !—if you had seen me last night sitting between them, you would have given me credit for the valour with which I fight against inclination—I will set a thousand Clarindas to drive the image of one Melmoth

Melmoth from my thoughts ; for, till that conquest is effected, after all my boasted heroism of friendship, I cannot sincerely and exactly tell you whether I am more your friend than my own.—Remember me to Montreville, Davenport and Val—Once more farewell!

FITZHENRY.”

Having directed and sealed what he considered to be the serious renunciation of every dear hope, of every flattering possibility—walked half a dozen times about his chamber, sometimes applauding his resolution, at others condemning his precipitance in making the resignation—now pleased—now vexed—and after all determining that the letter should go, he descended into the breakfast room, where he found only his mother and the little smiling Jemima, who both questioned him about the pleasantness

pleasantness of his late tour of North-angle and the Wardours.—Nor did Lady Jemima forget to ask him how he liked Mr. Wardour's *intended*; whom she supposed he must have seen, because Sir Valentine Willis told her the lady lived in the same neighbourhood with the Wardour family. He answered all their questions as well as he was able; but his sister accused him of blushing whilst he was doing justice to the charms and virtues of Miss Melmoth.

I blush, said he, because there are so few such young women as Miss Melmoth to be met with:—When you and Elizabeth come out formed by such an example as my mother, to increase the small number I have yet met with, of artless, modest, unaffected girls,—if I *then* blush, it will be from the pride I shall take in my sisters.

He

He spoke with energy, and he looked with fondness on the lovely Jemima, who threw her arms round him, and promised she would be as like her mamma, and the lady whose manners he so much approved, as ever she could. Lady Uxington, with maternal tears of rapture springing to her eyes, was going to say something, but was prevented by the entrance of Lady Owen and her daughter, who were the first of the whole party, consisting of sixteen, to shew themselves in the family circle.

Miss Clarinda Owen, who considered the affectation of delicacy to be the most important study a fashionable young lady could be engaged in, with a desire to perfect herself in this one pursuit, had, since she became an heiress, given up every other, except that of making all mankind the slaves of her beauty; whilst the coarseness of her mother's countenance, and the vulgarity of her

unpolished address, were such incentives to her application in the lesson of refinement, that her progress was astonishing—She had a voice, but not spirits to sing—she had legs, but not strength to walk—she had eyes to languish, but not to see with, except aided by a small glass that hung from a narrow black ribbon, and dangled on her white bosom.—Nature had given her a fine figure, to which, by the graces of affectation, she had added such an infantine helplessness, so many charms of beautiful feebleness, as seemed to invite the supporting arms of any charitable christian, who would open them to receive her. And on this morning, considering what had passed on the preceding, it is not to be wondered at, that Miss Owen should make her appearance more than usually oppressed with delicate languor—and in her own opinion particularly interesting; or that it should increase even to blushes and tremors, when

when accosted by Lord Fitzhenry with only a very natural, unmeaning enquiry after her health; which her alert mamma, having already paid her cringing compliments to Lady Uxington, was now ready to answer; and said, that for her share she could not tell what was come over Miss Owen since last night, for she was no more like the young lady this morning, that she was yesterday morning, than chalk is like cheese; and then added, with a leer at Fitzhenry, Pray, my Lord, is your Lordship no better than Miss Owen with your dancing?

'Faith! madam, I am neither better nor worse for the honour of being your daughter's partner for two short dances—if it had been a dozen with such a partner (bowing to Clarinda), you would not have heard me complain of fatigue.

More

More stragglers were now joining the party ; but these three were not interrupted, having taken their post in one of the bow windows, and Jemima nestled up by the side of her brother just in time for the compliment he had addressed to Miss Owen, but not soon enough to hear that part of it intended for Lady Owen, which, it must be acknowledged, was not quite so civil—and she cried out, Dear brother, what fine speeches you do make ! I should be glad to know if you say the same thing to all the ladies you dance with—because, if you let me into the secret, I shall be able to anticipate what my partners will say to me when I am a woman, and know how to laugh at their insincerity.

Here, my Lady Owen, as usual, prevented any other body from speaking, by choosing to answer for Lord Fitzhenry, as she had before done for her daughter to Lord Fitzhenry.

And

And pray, my Lady, said she, with a complexion that bore no likeness to either of her own elegant families of chalk or of cheese, I should be glad for to know why your Ladyship should suppose, because my Lord is polite to Miss Owen, that his Lordship would be polite to any body else?

Dear madam, you are vastly odd! drawled out the irritable heiress.

Not at all odd, Miss Owen—I only axed my Lady, because I thought she was too hard upon his Lordship, who, I believes, never speaks of these here things but from the very bottom of his heart.

Indeed I beg your pardon, madam, replied Jemima with an arch smile; if my brother has told Miss Owen that he is sincere, I am sure nobody has a right to doubt his sincerity.

Oh,

Oh, my Lady! I would never doubt it no more than my own—my Lord's word is as good as his bond.

I hope it will ever be so, madam, when I give it seriously; but where neither my heart nor my honour is in the affair, if to say civil things to the ladies who deserve them be insincerity, I am the most insincere of mortals.

At this moment Lady Uxington, who was seated in the midst of her circle, and beginning to pour out the tea, called to Fitzhenry, and bid him not detain the ladies any longer from their breakfast: a summons he joyfully obeyed with more good nature than they deserved, from the ungracious manner in which they now received his attentions. He presented one hand to mamma—one to the heiress—gaily led them to the table, and, to make up matters, placed himself once more between them—
though,

though, poor ladies! their hopes were a good deal faded since his Lordship's last plain declaration.

There is some how or other more *general* conversation when a party is formed about a round table, than a square one; and more chit-chat at a breakfast than at a dinner party. Lady Uxington was so full of her son's description of Northangle, High hill, and Miss Melmoth, that she could not help speaking of them to a Mrs. Lewis, a young married lady, whom she recollected to have heard say, her husband's seat was not more than ten miles from Lord Wardour's:—she began with acknowledging, that Fitzhenry had made her quite in love with the neighbourhood where he had been entertained with so much hospitality.

We have nothing else to recommend us in this country, madam, replied a well-bred

well-bred old gentleman, who had never been out of it: but since your Ladyship has condescended to come amongst us, I find we have yet something to learn, where before we thought ourselves perfect.

If your sincerity, sir, said the Countess, equals your politeness, you will give yourself the trouble of repeating this compliment to me at Uxington Lodge. He understood the invitation—bowed his thanks—and the conversation reverted to its former channel, by her Ladyship's asking Mrs. Lewis, if she was acquainted with Lord War-dour's family, and if she had ever seen Miss Melmoth.—Lord Fitzhenry broke off in the middle of something he was beginning to say to his fair neighbour, laid down his cup on the table to wait for Mrs. Lewis's reply—Miss Melmoth could be nothing to him, but there was
magic

magic in the name, and the spell was irresistible.

I hardly know how to answer your Ladyship, said Mrs. Lewis with a sneer, for which, if she had been a man, and under any other roof, Fitzhenry would have felled him to the earth :—indeed, madam, it is almost a matter of doubt to myself, whether I do or do not visit Lady Wardour; for notwithstanding Mr. Fellers has made a boast of our country hospitality, the Wardours are such queer odd people, that I have received but one visit from them, and made a return to it, in the six months that I have had the misfortune to be their neighbour.

If such, madam, are your misfortunes, what must be your blessings? cried Fitzhenry, with eyes flashing more than forked lightning.

Why,

Why. really, my Lord, my blessings consist, I believe, in what most other young women's blessings do consist : a house in town, another in the country —good family jewels—a plentiful table —splendid carriages—and a comfortable husband.

And very great blessings they are, cried Lady Owen ; nobody should know their value better than I do, who have had them all the days of my life ; for there never was a more comfortable husband than Sir Ogle : and he took care, dear ma'am, that Miss Owen should have them as well as his dowager.

The general laugh, it was impossible this speech should not create, was decently covered under Mrs. Lewis's ludicrous list of blessings—and even Lord Fitzhenry almost forgave her satirical stricture on the Wardours, in consideration

ration of the opportunity it afforded him to get rid, under her sanction, of risible sensations, with which he was almost suffocated.

Somebody asked Lady Owen, if Sir Ogle's family was not originally from Wales, as the name seemed to imply.

Not at all, said she: I suppose there are foreign Owens, as well as Welch Owens; or Sir Ogle and I should never have been called Sir Ogle and Lady Owen, for we are both foreigners, and only came over to England with our *shute* about three years ago.

May I presume, said the same sport-maker, to ask what foreign country had the honour of giving birth to Sir Ogle and your Ladyship?

You have heard, sir, I suppose, of St. Christopher?

Yes,

Yes, madam: but will you be so good to inform me, under what government the Island of St. Christopher is at present? for I did not know that we had ceded it to any other power.

I am vastly sorry, and I hope, sir, you will not think it no want of politeness, that I am not able to give you the satisfaction you want—but really I never do mix with people of business, so I cannot say who is governor now—but when Sir Ogle, Miss Owen and myself left it, one Mr. Heartwell had it.

Lady Uxington, who saw the hurricane gathering on every countenance, and feared it would burst upon the head of the self-created foreigner, proposed a walk in the woods; and hastily rising, though she had not swallowed her second dish of tea, all the rest followed her example—Lady Owen, who was never greater in her own eyes, nor less.

less in any other body's, than at that moment, desiring Lord Fitzhenry would lend his arm to Miss Owen, who could not walk so far without his Lordship's assistance.

Already he thought his attentions were become too much the subject of observation to some of the company: and not choosing to get the reputation of bestowing them entirely on fools and coquettes, he excused himself from going into the woods, by pleading a stiff ankle, which might prevent his dancing in the evening, if he did not stay at home and nurse it. This subterfuge was like to have drawn him into a worse scrape; for Lady Owen, determined he should not slip through their fingers, more kindly than considerately desired Miss Owen would also remain behind, and keep my Lord company—observing, that when young gentlemen were
sick,

sick, young ladies ought to take care of them.

Indeed I should not have thought of that, cried Miss Owen, piqued and offended—if his Lordship chooses to stay at home, he is extremely welcome to take care of himself—I cannot possibly have the honour to watch over him—and, seizing on Lady Jemima's arm instead of her brother's, walked delicately, her mother waddling after, to join the party who had gone before them—Jemima leaving a cunning look with Fitzhenry, which accused him of having taken the burthen from his own shoulders, and placing it on hers.

When Lady Elizabeth saw them coming unattended—she asked what they had done with their escort. Nothing, my Lady, said the foreigner, a little out of sorts, but that I do believe his Lordship have shammed gout or *rheumatis*,

or

or some of them there disorders, because he was so lazy he would not attend the young ladies; and so we are come away in a huff; for Miss Owen knows too well what belongs to her *situation*, to stay and wait upon him.

Bless me! cried Elizabeth, ready to die with laughing. I must run and see what ails him.

You may stay where you are, sister, said Lady Jemima, loth to be left to the caresses of two such females, who were ready to devour with fondness the sisters of Lord Fitzhenry, for the sake of Lord Fitzhenry.—Indeed, Elizabeth, it is quite needless your going back to see what is the matter, for, as Lady Owen tells you, it is nothing in the world but idleness that keeps him at home.

Well,

Well, well, but I must satisfy myself, however, replied Lady Elizabeth; and breaking from the hold of Jemima, who endeavoured to detain her, she was soon in the presence of her brother.—He lolled on a sofa, buried in profound meditation—his studies would be degraded by a more feeble appellation, for he was thinking of Miss Melmoth.

Elizabeth told him with what difficulty she had made her escape to come to him, and asked if his indisposition was real or pretended.

The latter, cried he, my dear girl—starting from his indolent posture, and putting a violent end to his painful reverie—I only pretended lameness, that I might not be accused of having lost all my other faculties—These Owens are eternal bores—I must shake them off when I can, or I may leave behind me the reputation of a blockhead, who,
without

without skill or superior music, can play only on marrow-bones and cleavers.

Dear Fitzhenry, we all thought you admired Miss Owen prodigiously—and I heard mamma tell papa this very morning, that she was afraid you might be taken in by her pretty face.

I admire Miss Owen!—*I* taken in by a pretty face!—Oh! my dear mother, how are you deceived in Fitzhenry!—If there was not another woman in the world, I would not make a wife of Clarinda Owen.

I am glad to hear you say so, brother: for, to tell you the truth, I was not without my fears as well as mamma; because you always sit by her, and speak to nobody else:—I should hate such a sister, and such a connection.

Never again degrade me by the odious supposition.

But why have you made it appear to the poor girl as if you really did like her?—I am sure there is Miss Floyd, Miss Gore, and Miss Fellows, who are all a thousand times more agreeable than Miss Owen : and yet I have not heard you say one civil thing to either of them.

It is because neither Miss Floyd, Miss Gore, or Miss Fellows, by themselves or their mammas, have asked me to make love to them.—I am therefore less obliged to their partiality, than to Lady Owen, or the fair Clarinda—I am giving you, my pretty little sister, in my own conduct, a lesson of instruction, or rather throwing it away upon a mind where there are no weeds of coquetry to eradicate.

And

And what, pray, is this lesson? that I might retain it; for though I hope never to forfeit your good opinion, respecting my abhorrence of levity—yet it would be pity a good lesson should be lost, which, if I never want it myself, may be made useful to others.

Why, you may see how it is, Elizabeth, even without my telling you. Are you so blind, as not to discover that the old designer is putting her rich daughter up to sale—that I am thought worthy to be a bidder—that the beautiful Clarinda has entered deeply into the business—and that my lesson is to be found in the consequences of these liberal invitations? I treat them as all men of spirit ought to treat them—but as no man of honour would treat any part of your sex, who were endowed with modest reserve, though otherwise portionless or unprotected. The protection of unobtrusive modesty is the greatest of

all protections—it is the enemy of folly, such as I play off upon the Owens—and presumption will not approach it.—My experience has been small in these matters, but my observations have superseded experience.—I know what all women ought to be—with such I am happy—I find what some women are; and with those I make myself merry.—Now what have you to say against all this wisdom?

Nothing, brother, only that what is mirth to you, may be misery to another—Lady Owen is shocking, and her daughter insignificant—yet after all, I cannot help feeling for her—if on appearances she should encourage tender sentiments, where a disappointment must inevitably follow. Lady Elizabeth sighed, but the sigh was so soft, that it did not reach the ears of her brother.

You

You are a sweet and powerful pleader, said he: but do not let your good nature get the better of your justice.— Though I sport with their folly, I treat their peace with respect; and have more than once told them both, that seriousness has no part in my affiduities. After knowing from myself that I have no designs—if they will persist in playing the fool, surely I have a right to play with them. When my spirits are a cup too low, their nonsense is a sort of cordial, which gives them a momentary relief.

How long have you been subject to the complaint of low spirits, Fitzhenry? this is the first time I have ever heard of them.

We shall have a dance again this evening, I hope, Elizabeth.

I hope so too: but you have not answered

swered my question, brother : what in the world should make you low spirited ?

Suppose it love.

That is impossible, for who can you be in love with ?

Yes, yes, it is, as you say, impossible—if it was love, it would be downright madness.

Perhaps it may be fatigue—your journey yesterday was a trying one.—Did you often see Mr. Wardour's Miss Melmoth, in this long visit you made at Northangle ?

Too often, yet not often enough.

Do you expect I am to understand so palpable a contradiction ?

How should you understand my meaning,

meaning, when I do not understand it myself?—Pish, low spirits and love! I have nothing to do with either of these torments—I am only jesting with your credulity, my dear. Wardour's Miss Melmoth, as you very properly call her, was almost every day at Northangle; and is, without exception, the most finished work that ever came from the hand of nature.

Elizabeth hesitated—it was only for one short moment.—How odd, she replied, was the tale, which Sir Valentine Willis, foolishly enough I thought, confided to Jenima—that Mr. Wardour did not like, or ever would marry, this beautiful creature!

Ridiculous! perfectly ridiculous, my dear sister! Valentine must have been dreaming—there is not a young man in the kingdom, who would not linger out one half of his life in torments, to be
blest

blest the rest of his days with the title of Miss Melmoth's husband.

Ah! how unlucky, said the gentle Elizabeth, susceptible of her brother's warmth, that there are not two Miss Melmoths, one for you and one for Mr. Wardour!—But I blush—only see how red my cheeks are—that I, who am so young, and ignorant of the world, should talk on such sort of subjects. For goodness' sake, Fitzhenry, forget that I have ever given my opinion, and let us talk of Mr. Wardour's love and Miss Melmoth no more.

They are coming, said Fitzhenry:—he made but one spring from the window to the door, and was gone. Lady Elizabeth guessed who were coming, looked out, and saw Lady Owen assisted by one of the gentlemen, dragging along between them the delicate heiress, who, as soon as she entered the room, threw

threw herself on a chair, and declared she would never again take another such walk; as she was sure the way she had been, was not less than three quarters of a mile.

Lady Elizabeth observed with a smile, that she or her sister did not feel themselves so much incommoded after a walk of three miles, which they had often taken before breakfast.

Oh! my dear Lady Elizabeth, drawled out Miss Owen, what would I give for such a constitution!—Yet your Ladyship, and dear Lady Jemima, both look so exceedingly delicate, one should hardly suppose it possible.

Now don't say no more to fatigue yourself, Miss Owen, cried her tender mamma, it shall never happen so again; I shall take care of that; for, whenever you return to this country, whether it

be to settle, or only to come and go like my Lady Uxington, you shall always bring your sedan with you ; and then, whenever you walk, it will always be behind, to take you up as soon as you grow tired.

Miss Owen, without making any reply to the wisdom of her mother, condescended to ask Lady Elizabeth, if her brother had yet recovered his lameness ; and seemed very little delighted, when told that indolence, not lameness, had prevented his attendance : and that his sister had been chatting with him the whole time they were absent.

And where is his Lordship now, pray, my Lady ? said the dowager of Sir Ogle Owen, as little pleased as her daughter.

Indeed, madam, that I cannot precisely tell your Ladyship ; for, when he saw you coming towards the house, he
left

left me without saying where he was going, or when he should come back.

Worse and worse! They both looked exceedingly disconcerted—the old lady muttered something about young gentlemen's politeness to young ladies; and Miss Clarinda, claiming the support of her arm, devoured by chagrin, and bursting with vexation, retired to her dressing-room; first having obtained from her dear Lady Elizabeth a very ready permission for her so doing; who hoped, by slightly wounding her vanity, she might have saved her from the still greater mortification of bestowing her affections where they would be disregarded.—But this amiable manœuvre was entirely without effect; as, after a week's visit at Mount Clear, and the cold though civil dampers thrown on their rapid advances by Lord Fitzhenry—when they left the house, they did not leave their hopes—on the contrary, never

never were two ladies more determined on one point, than that Miss Owen should be future countess of Uxington.

There only remained, when the last set of company withdrew from Mount Clear, three weeks, before the family were to remove from thence to Uxington Lodge. Part of that time the house, as before, was crowded with visitors, and part was passed in all the luxury of domestic harmony, which never appeared so full of charms, as when returning to them, like dear friends long absent, always wished for, never forgotten.

In one of those happy leifures, Lord Uxington talked to his son of his intended removal to the university on their return to England; and was more surprised than offended, when Lord Fitzhenry modestly signified his inclinations had a stronger bias towards making the tour of foreign countries, than pursuing
ing

ing his studies at Oxford. His father gave a moment to deliberation, and, the next, coincided with his wishes; when it was determined he should spend that winter in town, be presented at court, and the following spring pass over to the continent; there to continue two years in making useful observations, and visiting the different courts where he might expect to find amusement and reap improvement.

The Countess fully sanctioned with her approbation the plan her husband and son had concerted, because she thought it would be the means of settling his constitution; and because she should be indulged with his society for so many months, before it would be necessary for him to enter on his travels. As to Fitzhenry, in whose bosom was kindled a vivid spark he would have died to extinguish, nothing could equal the joy he received from the condescension

sion of his parents, to the only possible recipe that had ever presented itself to his eager enquiries, for the cure of a wounded heart, hopeless of a remedy from the eyes which had inflicted it; and his sisters were so charmed, so delighted by this arrangement, that the little Jemima was half out of her wits, whilst the sunshine of vivacity brightened the more pensive features of Elizabeth.

A few days before the family deserted Mount Clear, the same Mrs. Lewis, who, it might be remembered, was there on a visit some weeks before, called as she drove by the door in her way to London, to know if she could be of any use in forwarding their family commands. At the entreaties of Lady Uxington, she was prevailed upon to stop and take some refreshment: whilst drinking her chocolate, she told Lord Fitzhenry by way of news, that his
friend

friend Lord Wardour died two days before of a putrid disorder; that the Dowager was reported to be inconsolable; that an express had been dispatched for his son; and that Mrs. Melmoth with her niece were removed from High Hill to Northangle.

Fitzhenry's countenance went through as many changes as theameleon, and in as short a time: he was about as much able to reason, as a man who is dreaming of a thousand complicated events, none of which in the confusion of his fancy he is able to comprehend. He said he was afflicted for the death of Lord Wardour; but he did not say, Now, that my friend is the master of his own destiny, will he or will he not persevere in his determination to avoid a union with Miss Melmoth? Wardour had answered his letter, and confirmed what he had before asserted, that Miss Melmoth was the object of his friendship,

ship, but not of his affection. Fitzhenry did not yet believe that he knew his own sentiments: he could not credit what appeared so incredible:—These were thoughts which he kept to himself: they were too sacred to be confided even in the breast of his own family, after Mrs. Lewis had taken her leave.

Lady Elizabeth was not present when the death of Lord Wardour became the topic of conversation; but, on her return for walking, every circumstance being detailed to her as it was related by Mrs. Lewis, she shed some tears, and then, as if she thought they wanted an apology, declared how much their goodness to her brother had interested her in the misfortunes of that amiable family.—Will you not go once more, dear Fitzhenry, said she, to enquire how poor Lady Wardour does, before you leave this country? I suppose, too, you may see your friend at the same time;

time; for, as Mrs. and Miss Melmoth are removed to Northangle, his Lordship will have other inducements, added to those of duty, to hasten his journey.

It is the very thing that I mean to do, replied Lord Fitzhenry, with vivacity, if my father and mother have no objection to my leaving them for a few days; indeed a few hours may suffice for the time I shall be absent; for, if Wardour does not get there before me, I shall only send my compliments, and return back immediately.

I think a message from this house might do as well, said the Earl.

And for my part, added the Countess, I have insuperable objections; I wonder, my love, how you could propose to your brother that he should undertake a journey so full of dangers; have you already forgot that Mrs. Lewis declared

declared Lord Wardour died of a putrid fever? or, do you not know, that of all other disorders it is the most infectious, and the most fatal in its consequences?

Lady Elizabeth blushed “ celestial rosy red;” and Fitzhenry, seeing his mother extremely agitated, assured her he would think of it no more, since it met with her disapprobation. A gloom for some time after visibly oppressed him, and these words were always sounding in the ears of his imagination—“ of all disorders it is the most infectious and the most fatal in its consequences”—they were the words of wisdom, of experience—of his mother, who was a perfect oracle in the estimation of her whole family: idle fears had no part in the composition of her ideas; where she announced danger, there must be danger: apprehensions for his own safety he had none; he would with equal readiness

readiness have attended the bed of sickness, whether death in the form of consumption or the pestilence had hovered about the pillow of a friend for whom he was interested ; or even to an unknown victim of a disease which his presence could have softened, he would not have scrupled to administer. What then was his motive, when he renounced his intentions of making one more visit to Northangle ? It was not a parsimonious care of his own preservation, but a respectable deference to the peace of his mother. Neither would that sentence, which now appeared so terrible, have been thought of a second time, but for the consideration that Miss Melmoth had been plunged into all the fatal dangers of infection—it was from this cause that the words of Lady Uxington so often reverted to his memory, armed with terrors that reason would not have conquered, if the daily answers which he received to his enquiries, from

from Northangle, had not been of the most favourable nature — that Lady Wardour was as well as could be expected, and that Mrs. and Miss Melmoth were in perfect health.

The last messenger dispatched on this occasion so important to the peace of Lord Fitzhenry, came back to Mount Clear when the whole family were on the wing for Uxington Lodge, and brought with him a short note from Lord Wardour to his friend, containing only these words:—

BILLET.

In the duties of a son I do not forget the claims of friendship; I thank you, dear Fitzhenry, in the name of my mother and the ladies who now make a part of her family, for your late attentions; do me the honour to convey my acknowledg-

acknowledgment to Lord and Lady Uxington and your sisters. I arrived only last night: ah! what a void do I find in our domestic circle!—You knew my father:—my mother lives—it is as much as I can say for the present.—I am less happy than when I wrote to you from England; but not less steady to former opinions, or less the devoted friend of Fitzhenry.

WARDOUR.

It may be supposed that this note was read with avidity, and more than once, by Fitzhenry; neither is it unnatural to imagine, that he found some food for hope to feed on in the last two lines. Greedily would his soul have devoured the delicious repast, if his prudence had not checked the hungry inclination.—Miss Melmoth was a catholic; and if there had been no other bar to a union
with

with her, that of itself was invincible. To be the husband of a catholic, he must forfeit the confidence, the affections, destroy the happiness, and perhaps shorten the life of his father, whose opinions on this one point, as Fitzhenry once signified to his friend Wardour, were well grounded and unconquerable. The little pathetic story, on which his prejudices were founded, may as well be told in this, as in any other part of the history.

Lord Uxington had one only sister, not beautiful, but agreeable almost to fascination: she lost her mother at an early period of her existence, and her education had been intrusted to a relation of that mother, one of the most thoughtless, dissipated women in the world; at least of that sort, who have never, by any capital error, entirely forfeited all pretensions to moral reputation.

Nobody

Nobody had been more deceived in the character of Mrs. Pemberton, than her own sister, the mother of Lady Isabella Fitzhenry, who made it a dying request to her Lord, that, whether he did or did not marry a second wife, the charge of her infant might be consigned to the care of Mrs. Pemberton. Her petition was granted, but not without restrictions, one of which was, that as long as he could make his house agreeable to her, she might consider herself the mistress of it; but that whenever she gave the preference to any other place of residence, he could not permit Lady Isabella to be a stranger from his house, and from his presence; and on these terms it was, that Mrs. Pemberton condescended to supply the place of a mother to her infant charge, so far as appertained to the choice of governesses, masters, personal graces and every sort of accomplishment, but no further: she might have been a Heathen, a Jew, or
a Maho-

a Mahometan, for any concern she gave herself about the matter. But her father, who saw this was the only neglected part of his daughter's education, took upon himself to supply the vacuum, not only by his own example, but the instruction of his favourite parish priest, whose purity of soul, elegant erudition, knowledge of a present and future world, age, and respectability fitted him for the important charge of the mind, whilst that of Lady Isabella's person, dress and address, was entirely under the direction of her aunt Pemberton.

The late and present Lord Uxington adored Lady Isabella : there was nothing on earth so dearly beloved by them, as this daughter—this sister. At nineteen and eighteen, the brother and sister were both presented at court on the same day : the former soon after set out on his travels, and the latter was ushered
by

by her aunt into all the dissipation of the great world, from whence she had never withdrawn herself; having always spent the most fashionable season in town during the whole progress of her niece's education; returning to her duty once or twice a week, as she could find leisure, just to see that nothing in her department had been neglected.

The applause she acquired in bringing out so finished a creature, of whom it was known she had the entire direction, was a gratification to Mrs. Pemberton's vanity, which nothing less than a constant exhibition of her charming niece could satisfy. Her father would sometimes remonstrate at the avidity with which she was whirled from one scene of pleasure to another: but Mrs. Pemberton found out the way at first to lessen, and then silence all his objections; it was by making him feel the approbation bestowed on his daughter, as a vain

man relishes the flattery immediately directed to himself. Lord Uxington, wherever he went, heard nothing but the praises of Lady Isabella, and, wherever he accompanied her, saw none so much followed, so much admired, as Lady Isabella. He was certainly elated, though not intoxicated, by this universal homage: he had every right to enjoy the preference she eminently deserved; and what had he to fear, protected under his own roof and under his own eye, possessed of prudence, modesty, sense, gentleness and wit, a virtue and a talent which are seldom born twins? It was now too that the treasures which had been added to his daughter's education by the instruction of Doctor Burnet, gave Lord Uxington confidence that Lady Isabella's principles, like gold seven times tried in the fire, would at every assay come out from the furnace of dissipation more pure and of more value. He saw, that
though,

though, in compliance to the will of her aunt, she gave into the humour of the moment, a life of what is commonly called pleasure would never be the life of her choice.

Numberless were the proposals his Lordship received for his daughter in the course of that winter; but in the midst of lovers her heart remained unimpressed; and when referred for the decision of their fate, to Lady Isabella herself, how could she decide in favour of one, when alike indifferent to all? Neither did she admit of dangles to swell her train; her rejection, which followed every application, being equally marked with firmness, as it was ever distinguished by politeness. Lord Uxington, perfectly satisfied with the whole tenor of his daughter's conduct, though he wished to see her happily settled, betrayed no anxiety at the little inclination she evinced for a change of condition,

and often assured her that, whenever her heart made its election, his approbation should sanction her choice.

Mrs. Pemberton saw this *trait* of indifference in the character of her niece, with very different sentiments from those of her noble brother-in-law; she was first grieved, next peevish, then angry, and at last completely enraged at what she called folly, affectation and stupidity. Lady Isabella heard her reproaches sometimes with playfulness, sometimes with silence, but always with respect. These innocent endeavours to allay the storm of her aunt's displeasure were entirely without effect; nothing less than a sacrifice she was not inclined to make, could have appeased it; and from being distractedly fond of her sister's daughter, Mrs. Pemberton very soon beheld the amiable girl more as an object of disgust than affection—she had lost her fashion—she did nothing well—she

—she said nothing proper—she was unlike all other young women of her rank and education.—I almost blush, Lady Isabella, to take you out with me; the eyes of the whole world are upon you — There goes, they cry with a sneer, the haughty daughter of Lord Uxington, who gives herself such prodigious airs, that even the very first of our nobility are not good enough for her proud Ladyship.

And the world says all this of poor Isabella! she replied. What can I do, madam, to convince you and them of my humility? Shall I injure some worthy man who never injured me, by giving him a hand without a heart? Besides, what has my disinclination to accept the addresses that are offered, what can it have to do with humility? I may receive honour from them, but that I can bestow it, is quite out of the question.—When next you hear them
abuse

abuse and call me names, my dear aunt, have the goodness to say, in my vindication, that the want of humility is less my crime, than the want of ambition. In the mean time, with my father's permission and your own, I shall keep myself, as much as I possibly can, out of the way of these very severe commentators.

It is impossible to say how miserable the disappointed aunt contrived to make the hours of Lady Isabella drag on both in private and public; yet never once did she carry a complaint to her father, or abate of the deference due to a relation so near in blood, however distant in manners, temper and sentiments. She even, to conceal from the observation of Lord Uxington the terms on which they now lived together, went oftener with her aunt to assemblies, balls and operas than she ever intended to have done again; but this condescen-
sion

sion weighed nothing in the balance of Mrs. Pemberton's mortifications. Though at first, for the sake of her fair charge, she had a general attraction for all the young men of fashion, whose aim it was to possess the hand of her accomplished niece; now that Lady Isabella would neither marry nor flirt, they had all forsaken her, thinking it a loss of time to throw away any attention on the vine, when the fruit was beyond their reach. Mrs. Pemberton's steps were no longer attended by a herd of admirers; her ears no longer fed with the music of praise; her morning levees no longer crowded with brilliant stars, which might almost have put the sun itself out of countenance; her evening table no longer surrounded by the same bright luminaries all contending for the honour of belonging to her party; nor was her box at the opera better attended, though once the hateful object of bitter envy to all the ladies,
who

who from their own solitary cells could look across the house and see Mrs. Pemberton's overflowing with a multitude of dear creatures, whom themselves had failed to attract by the most ardent and unremitting labours of attraction.

Vanity herself could have chosen no summit to render her figure more conspicuous, than that in which once stood Mrs. Pemberton : if like her, a goddess so universally worshipped would be content with receiving, as her own, the homage that belonged to another ; thus disposed she could not have been more advantageously exalted. What is there not to be said in such a case, for a mere mortal's chagrin, who had no pretensions of her own to engage that which she could not exist without, the envy of one sex and the devoirs of another ! What allowances are there not to be made for her spleen, her rage and her eternal ill humour, when, owing to the
frigid

frigid propriety of Lady Isabella's pure and artless manners, she saw herself neglected by the men, and without powers of tormenting the women!—Then Lady Isabella's obstinacy was downright shocking: if she had made a choice in favour of one candidate, her consequence might have lessened, but it would not have been so intirely lost: by the means of *propriety* and *obstinacy*, those stumbling-blocks in her pursuit of popularity, she saw herself hurled from that eminence, where, exalted on the stilts of another's glory, she could look down and behold at her feet a myriad of vassals. From a summit so dazzling, to be plunged into the abyss of nothingness, to have no interest in the *devoirs* of mankind, to create no jealousy in the breast of womankind, she could not, she did not support the change with any thing like philosophy, or even common patience: and when Lord Uxington

took his daughter into the country, she positively refused to go with them.

In the course of the summer she came twice to Uxington Lodge, and stayed a week at each visit. Lady Isabella was shocked to see the ravages a few months had made in her person; she was always remarkably thin and lean, but now an absolute skeleton; for it had been the work of vexation to pick from her bones every atom of flesh, and to leave only the skin to cover them. Nor was this all, for it had besides introduced some serious complaints with which her constitution was before unacquainted.

Lord Uxington, who had no suspicion of the source to which these latent maladies owed their origin, united with her kind affectionate niece in trying to prevail on Mrs. Pemberton to return and live with them as she used to do. She seemed gratified by the invitation which
she

she would not accept, and really intended a very civil apology for declining it, by saying, she was now arrived at that time of life when those pleasures, so many of which had been sacrificed to family duties, were become absolutely necessary to keep up her own spirits: young people, she observed, who were naturally romantic, might dream away their time in the country, well enough satisfied with trees and water falls, but that age required greater indulgences. Company, and varied amusements, were the only charms that could make it supportable: conceive, said she, that I was to live fifty years longer; can you suppose at a hundred I should not find an increase, rather than an abatement in my pleasures, quite requisite to fill up time with any tolerable comfort? There was no answering opinions like these, and Mrs. Pemberton carried them back to town with her uncontroverted.

Lady

Lady Isabella requested of her father that she might be allowed to pass her winters alternately in the country and in town; he had consented with pleasure, and Mrs. Pemberton in vain applied personally and by letter, to frustrate this new regulation. There were some fine young men just come from the mint of St. James's who would be very proper alliances for her niece, and who, it was probable, might not be so unsuccessful, if they made proposals, as her Ladyship's lovers of an older date. And not being able to accomplish this favourite plan, by her niece's predilection for the late arrangement, poor Mrs. Pemberton experienced a second disappointment, if possible, more formidable than the first; she could not eat, she could not sleep, she could only be carried from assembly to assembly; totter from table to table; and was always expected to die, with the cards
in

in her hand, before the rubber was determined.

Thus passed the winter and spring : the summer brought Mrs. Pemberton again to the Lodge, in bad health and worse temper : both however yielded a little—one to the tender nursing of Lady Isabella, the other to the invincible sweetness of her mild and endearing disposition.—Mrs. Pemberton did not leave them till the latter end of November, when she said her friends would be all coming to town, and they could detain her no longer ; at parting she embraced her niece with much affection, saying, she should count the hours, and think them unusually long till they met again in London, where Lord Uxington had promised to be the first week in January, to meet his son, whom about that time he expected in Britain ; and Mrs. Pemberton consented once more to become a member of his family, full of hopes
that

that she should at last be able to accomplish her plans; but these hopes were for the present buried in her own deep bosom; she had mistaken Lady Isabella's compassion for her infirmities as the indication of entire submission to her will, and had been seldom better disposed towards her engaging niece, than at the moment she bade her adieu.

Lady Isabella did not look forward with much less impatience than her aunt, for their removal to town, but very different motives created the same sensations: the former was eager to embrace a beloved brother, the latter to re-establish her empire over the fashionable male world. Many subjects, she foresaw, would return to their forfeited allegiance, when Lady Isabella, more beautiful than ever, should again make her appearance on the gay scene of action, and many new ones she expected to find amongst the number of those youths

youths who had not yet been honoured with the sight of so much loveliness.

At length the time, so ardently anticipated by both the ladies, did arrive, and Lord Uxington expected to have found Mrs. Pemberton at his house to receive them; his daughter having informed her aunt when the day was fixed, and conveyed their mutual request that she would meet them; but instead of receiving her personal compliments, they were greeted by the following note, which had been left at the house two hours before the family came to town.

N O T E.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE been so unwell for some days,
that my physicians will not let me stir
out,

out, though I had twenty engagements on my hands, and have been obliged to break them all; it has vexed me to death, as some of them would have been exceedingly pleasant. Tell my Lord, with my love, that I shall have the honour to make one of his society as soon as I am permitted to move. But, my dear, I must see you immediately, for I am absolutely dying to embrace you: Do you know I am kept on so strict a mental regimen by my doctors, that they only allow me to see two or three of my friends at a time: was ever any thing so cruel? My set for this evening are all antediluvians, so you may venture to come amongst us without the ceremony of making any alteration in your dress.—I hope you have not lost your fine country colour; the rose-leaf becomes you amazingly: if it should be faded, I shall be sorry for the accident, but can afford you no time to renew it: for as soon as I am able to
emerge

emerge from my present disagreeable confinement, I shall have nothing in the world to do but go about with you, wherever pleasure invites us—I shall expect you, my dear, in half an hour after you are set down at your own door ; do not on any account disappoint me : I shall be exceedingly ill if I sleep without seeing you.—Are you not my child, as well as my niece? and have I not ever been

Your tender mother, as well as
affectionate aunt,

M. PEMBERTON?

After the receipt of this letter, strange as were some parts of its contents, Lady Isabella flew to the arms of her invalid aunt, whose faults and oddities were lost in the recollection of the many obligations contracted in her infant state,
and

and which the most severe of her treatment, since that period, had not been able to efface.

Mrs. Pemberton's manner of mentioning her disorder had not prepared Lady Isabella for any thing very serious: she was, therefore, the more alarmed to find her not only in bed, but in a high fever. With much difficulty she persuaded her aunt to send excuses to the ladies, who were expected to make up a little cribbage party that evening, but were not yet come; and ordering a field-bed to be put up in Mrs. Pemberton's room, she left her no more until she could be moved with safety to the house of her father; where again she tenderly dedicated her whole time to the perfect re-establishment of her health, that had suffered considerably from the late violent attack, which had been brought on by the incessant pursuit of

of dissipation, and followed with many appearances of danger.

It was the beginning of February, before Mrs. Pemberton found herself well enough to join the family circle; and by so long a confinement to one room, from which the whole world were shut out, except the amiable Isabella, she had contracted a discontented gloom, which the best efforts of her niece could not disperse; in vain she read to her, sung, played, in vain exerted all her various lively and entertaining talents, to amuse this unthankful woman; she would neither be entertained nor amused; though, to all her niece's other endeavours, was added that of procuring a constant evening party in her own chamber, as soon as she was able to sit up in her chair: and not to incommode her with too many visitors, she always made a fourth at the card table herself, though cards were,
of

of all things, her aversion.—I wish, she would say, after company were gone, particularly if she had lost her money, you did not give yourself the trouble, Isabella, of bringing these people to me: can you conceive, child, that I, who have visited foreign courts, and lived so much in the great world, can be delighted to receive two or three old women, who have not intellects enough, even to play a game of judgment like rational beings?—Indeed, my dear, I must not be tormented in this manner: I cannot bear to see the same nodding heads and unmeaning faces every day.

Lady Isabella rejoiced, when her fretful patient, with the help of her arm, walked from the dressing to the drawing-room, and in two days after took her place at the dinner-table, where her lovely niece presided with ease, spirit and dignity. Lord Uxington was also exceedingly well pleased that he could
again.

again enjoy so much of his daughter's society, of which he had too long been curtailed, by her close attendance on his sister-in-law.

Such was the situation of the Uxington family when Lord Fitzhenry returned from the continent, where he had been detained some weeks beyond the time first proposed for revisiting his native country : the cause of his detention he now presented to his father, sister and aunt. It was the Earl of Hillford, whom he had met with on his travels, contracted a friendship for him, and whose indisposition was admitted a sufficient plea for protracting his return. —By Lady Isabella it was thought more than sufficient, for with the presence of this stranger ended all her indifference.

Lord Hillford had passed the days of inconsiderate flightiness ; he was turned of thirty, his person not handsome, but
his

his manners captivating.—Lady Isabella had never met with any half so captivating—she looked, she listened, she learned a lesson, never before comprehended: her senses, rather than her passions, taught her what it was to love: and when Lord Hillford was proposed for her, she assured her father she would never exchange her single state, for any other husband.—The difference of religion appeared to be the only bar to their mutual happiness. What pains did the enraptured lover take, and what vows did he make to remove it! Mrs. Pemberton was his advocate, Lord Fitzhenry his friend: the difficulty was at last got over, by every concession on the part of Lord Hillford, that a man madly in love could make, to obtain the object of his passion. The children of this marriage were to be bred protestants: if their mother died in their infancy, they were to be given up to the care of her family till their religious opinions
were

were fully established : she was to be allowed a domestic chaplain of her own choosing ; her own servants to be protestants ; and Lord Hillford was never to carry his wife out of England, as long as her father lived, or even after his death, but with her own consent, and the entire approbation of her brother.

When these preliminaries were shewn to the good divine, who had so large a share in Lady Isabella's education, he did not flatter Lord Uxington with his approbation : he shook his head, and said, it was the best, he believed, that could be made of a bad matter, but positively refused the office of chaplain, in such a mixed household, with a noble appointment, which was offered to his acceptance, by his friend and patron. Firmly as he thought himself fixed to his resolution, it was afterwards shaken by the tears, the prayers, the entreaties of Lady Isabella : she was as dear to him

as

as a child of his own could have been; and what he refused to established friendship, he granted to affection truly paternal. Lord Hillford joined in the politest and most candid terms, to enforce the petition of his gentle, all lovely Isabella.—Lord Hillford was an adept in hypocrisy—he was every thing but what he appeared to be, except in his inclination for the daughter of Lord Uxington; there, if he was a hypocrite, he had not only deceived others, but was himself deceived.

Lord Fitzhenry had picked up this wonderful genius at Rome, where he was second to no man but the holy Pontiff himself, whose confidence he enjoyed. Accident brought them acquainted, design and liking rendered them inseparable; and Lord Hillford having business that called him to Britain, he accepted the invitation of his newly acquired friend, to return with him,

him, and to take up his residence with his family as long as he continued in England; which he signified would be a very short time, as he could not persuade himself, that a man who had no family ties could exist any where so pleasantly as in Italy; of which charming country he had the honour to consider himself a native.

Lord Hillford was only a native of Italy by adoption; his origin, his title, and his estates were Irish. He hated his own country, and had spent the greatest part of his life in foreign courts, where his rank and immense fortune procured him the most flattering distinctions. France had loaded him with honours, and Italy conferred the high dignity of Prince of the empire on this bigot son of her own holy church.— Lord Hillford was a bigot, stern, harsh, cruel, and relentless—vices to which his hypocrisy gave the colouring of moderation,

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ration, placidity, humanity and susceptibility. He had never been in love till he saw Lady Isabella Fitzhenry; nor would he have indulged his first and lively passion by uniting himself to a heretic, had he not predetermined, that, in defiance of the most solemn engagements, as soon as he had made her his wife, he would also oblige her to adopt his opinions. Before that time, nothing could be more moderate, more condescending, more submissive; every thing must be done as Lady Isabella's friends chose it should be done; and, whilst his fate hung doubtful on the demurs of a cautious father, he even went so far as to let fall hints fraught with pretended fears of his own steadiness on those serious points where he had the misfortune to dissent in opinion from Lady Isabella.

The bride elect was not so much elated with the prospect of her felicity,
in

in being united to the only man for whom her heart had ever avowed a preference, as Mrs. Pemberton was intoxicated, not only by the event itself, and the splendid *agrémens* attending this alliance; but, above all other gratifications, the greatest she could possibly experience arose from the profound respect, veneration and tenderness, with which Lord Hillford paid his court to herself. He declared, she had every sort of claim to his admiration, affection, duty and gratitude: he admired her as the most accomplished of her sex (and certainly Mrs. Pemberton, in the fashionable acceptation of the word, had few competitors who could rival her in knowledge of the polite world, and its boundless system of etiquette): he loved her, because she loved his Isabella; he had the duty of a son for her, because she was the adopted mother of his Isabella; and she commanded all his gratitude, because to her goodness he

should owe the possession of a wife, not less accomplished by education than beautiful by nature.

His Lordship's invariable attention was a radical cure for all Mrs. Pemberton's complaints, and all her ill humour. Her niece was charming, and Lord Hillford adorable. Jewels, clothes, equipage, house, furniture, on every thing her judgment was consulted, her magnificent taste approved, and her choice was always the choice of Lord Hillford. Whatever pleased him could not but please Lady Isabella; the newborn affections of her heart were, by an ill-boding fatality, so decidedly his own, that he already considered her as the easy prey of his arts, and as reconciled to the bosom of the mother church. Whilst waiting for the preparations, he had actually written to his Holiness, stated his reasons for uniting himself to a heretic, received his sanction to the alliance,

alliance, and a command to bring over his beautiful profelyte, that he might embrace her as the beloved daughter of his flock, saved from perdition by miraculous interference. But had his Holiness been more conversant in the ways of the world, he would have known, that to love and be beloved is no miracle at all. Or had Lord Hillford known that Lady Isabella's affections were not more lively than her principles were steady, he would never have entertained the fallacious hope of being able to pervert them.

The present Lord Uxington, then Lord Fitzhenry, had preceded the marriage of his sister, by his own with the amiable Countess, whom my readers were introduced to first at Uxington Lodge, and from thence followed her to Mount Clear. He was engaged to her before he commenced his travels, and married her in two months after
his

his return, six months prior to Lady Isabella's becoming the wife of Lord Hillford. When the families divided, the new married pair, with the consent of the Earl, passed into Ireland, where it was necessary Lord Hillford should shew himself, in the arrangement of his great possessions. Mrs. Pemberton and Doctor Burnet went with them; the former from inclination, the latter in consequence of the stipulated articles, and his acceptance of the domestic chaplainship. He had resigned his living, nor would accept any emolument annexed to his new office; his private fortune being considerable enough to make him independent of pecuniary motives: indeed he had no view but one—he was interested in the preservation of his adopted daughter's happiness and principles; and to these considerations only he had made the sacrifice of his interest, as well as of his inclinations.—At the same time that Lord and
Lady

Lady Hillford set out on their Irish expedition, Lord Uxington went with his son and daughter-in-law to visit his new purchase in Wales ; having just before bought a large estate in that country, from political views, on which he afterwards built the beautiful seat called Mount Clear ; so called, from the gradual eminence of situation, and the pure salubrious air of its neighbourhood.

Before the Uxington family separated, and before Lord Hillford bore away from its bosom the pride of its love, the glory of its fame, and the epitome of its virtues, a mutual agreement passed, that they should all assemble in town early the following spring. Alas ! how little binding are the leagues formed between sincerity and dissimulation ! It was the least of his Lordship's intentions, that Lady Hillford should ever again be united to the society of her fond relations : his own plans had been
long

long and deeply laid ; he would adopt no new ones, he would pursue no others.

The mask Lord Hillford put on to accomplish his purpose was not torn, but gradually taken from his conduct. At first he was hardly more attentively polite to his wife, than to her aunt, and the spiritual director of her conscience ; but as his assiduities to the former increased, his respect for the latter diminished. Still the charming Isabella saw no alteration in her Lord ; for Love is always throwing dust in the eyes of his votaries, that they may not see faults in the idols of their worship ; which, if clearly beheld, could not fail of very much weakening his dominion over them.

The change in Lord Hillford's manners to Doctor Burnet, though not perceived by his Lady, was extremely visible

ble to the object of his cold civility: but he would not disturb her peace, by any communication of his own observations; he saw that she believed herself happy, and was satisfied by the constant assurances she gave him, that her Lord had never attempted to shake the foundation of her faith; and as he continued to receive from his beloved charge, all the officious tender duties filial affection could exact, he gave himself very little trouble about his Lordship's growing neglect towards him, conscious that he had not deserved it.

Had Mrs. Pemberton, instead of being forty, and plain in her person, had she been classed with the young and handsome of her sex, Lady Hillford might have collected stubble enough to light up a flame of jealousy, in the frequent private interviews that happened between her husband and her aunt, and the redundancy of court he paid to her

and her opinions on all occasions. These daily occurrences, it is true, were noticed by Lady Hillford, but very much to the advantage of her Lord; having the liberality to place on the debtor side of her own account of tender obligations to this adored husband, all the never-ceasing attentions bestowed by him on the aunt, whom gratitude pointed out to her, in the light of a parent.

Lord Hillford managed his kindness as courtiers do their interest; he never bestowed it, unless something more than a distant prospect of return was in view. His conversations with Mrs. Pemberton always turned on tender and serious subjects; it was then that he was more than ever passionately attached to his wife; it was then that he would wring his hands, press the hands of Mrs. Pemberton, shed tears over them, and lament

lament that his Isabella was not a catholic.

The good Lady suffered herself to be entertained with this sort of discourses, and shewed no resentment : on the contrary, flattered with so singular a mark of his confidence, she would ask him to explain the precise difference there was between a protestant and a catholic, confessing she had hitherto been so much engaged by the world and her family, as not to have given herself time to consider in what it could possibly consist, when both parties professed christianity.

Mrs. Pemberton was now brought to the very summit, whither my Lord had been so long and ably conducting her. He modestly announced himself insufficient to the task of enlightening that understanding which was already illuminated with every truth but *one* : on that monosyllable *one* he laid a strong emphasis,

phasis, which added to her desire of information, and Lord Hillford requested to introduce a friend to her closet, whose learning and piety qualified him to satisfy all her enquiries, the rationality of which filled him with respect and admiration.

It cannot be doubted that the friend so strongly recommended was no other than a priest, warm in the work of conversion: and on this occasion he entered upon the business with so much energy, that in the course of a very few interviews Mrs. Pemberton's was fully completed, and all her former errors renounced; when, having no more to answer for on her own account, those of her deluded niece became a weight of equal, if not a greater burthen than those original sins, for which she had in her own case received absolution.

The

The whole of this intrigue, managed with so much caution and privacy, was unknown to any of the family, but the persons concerned. At first Mrs. Pemberton, with all the zeal of a new convert, wanted to declare her present opinions, and to glory in having got rid of her old ones. But here for a time she was overruled by his Lordship, who thought she would have greater influence over the mind of her niece, by first indicating a wish to renounce her errors, than if she was to confess that she had already renounced them.

Mrs. Pemberton would not have disobliged Lord Hillford, or disobeyed the director he had placed over her conscience, if, by obliging the one and obeying the other, she had been assured of forfeiting the affection of her family, and the friendship of all the rest of the world. Lord Hillford entreated that she would, the priest commanded that she

she should, continue to wear her former appearance, and attend as usual, both in public and private, Lady Hillford's mode of worship. This hypocrisy, they argued, was to save the soul of her niece, and the saints would set it down to her account as a virtue: and, with a promise of receiving daily absolution for her offence against truth, she submitted to perform the part they appointed:

—Whilst acting under the influence of this mongrel sort of religion, Lady Hillford was very much surprised, if not alarmed, at the hints she frequently let fall when they were alone, of the great misery it must be to a man of sense and seriousness, whose very soul was wrapped in love for one dear object, to reflect that, when death should separate them in this world, they could never, never be re-united in Heaven!—Once, when she was talking in this manner, her

her niece observed with a smile, though a tear at the same instant trembled in her eye, that she should never entertain a fear for the fate of a soul so amiable as her dear Lord's, and not only hoped, but believed, that he was quite as liberal in his sentiments of her.

I think not, replied her aunt drily: I wish you would consider his situation and your own; for though he is cheerful enough in your presence, I assure you he is very miserable out of it.—These observations, with many others of the same tendency, being often repeated, and impressed at every repetition with energy, which sometimes amounted almost to acrimony, her spirits became depressed, and she confessed to Doctor Burnet, that she was not entirely satisfied with her aunt's private documents. He saw immediately into the whole mystery, and would have set her on her guard against the stratagems of

of a husband, who only made use of her aunt as a tool to further his purpose: but though she accused Mrs. Pemberton, she could not bear that suspicion or accusation should glance on the sacred character of her husband; and with a flood of tears, the purity of which might have atoned for any crimes less black than those meditated by Lord Hillford; she sweetly combated what she called the prejudices of her revered guardian, who immediately threw a veil over the idea, which afflicted her to no purpose; for though he could point out the evil, the remedy for the evil was not within his view. Separation!—it was a dreadful word—his soul recoiled at it, his lips would never have pronounced it.

Well, madam, said he, we will discard the idea altogether that militates against your peace, and against the honour of a character which it is become

our

our duty to hold sacred. Make your mind easy, resign yourself to the will of God, serve him with truth and with steadiness; let no new doctrines, however urged by fondness, or forced upon you by authority, divorce you from that mode of worship in which you have been educated: there is no love like the love of your Maker; there is no authority but in the great Ruler of the universe; serve him, and fear not, though the whole inhabitants of the world which he has created, rise up against you!—Is not the Creator greater than the created?—Do not weep, my child! it is yet early days—all may yet do well—I am an old man, and age is prone to suspicion—your husband may never intend to invade your privilege of conscience; if so, why should you weep?—But, if you must be persecuted for God's sake, then is it still more necessary, it is your absolute duty, that these tears should be dried up,
and

and that your whole soul should be converted from softness to immutable firmness, that no weak womanly struggles may prevent you from reaping the glorious triumphs of a victory, which saints and martyrs have not thought too dear to purchase with their lives.

Lady Hillford, penetrated by his words, and exalted by his subject, sinking on her knees, vowed never to depart from her duty: the vow was registered in Heaven, it supported her through every trial by which she was afterwards assailed, and never left a vacancy in her pure soul, for fear or temptation to enter into it.

Of all the families to whom Lady Hillford was introduced by her husband on her first coming over to Ireland, she had attached herself, with a particular degree of preference, to that of Lord Wardour, not more from affection

fection, to her own Lord, who had the most unbounded friendship for him, than from the predilection of her heart for La y Wardour, who was also a catholic of that moderate and philanthropic description, which are often to be met with, which protestants must love, all sects revere, and Heaven itself approve.

The husband of this charming young creature was also good from the very bottom of his heart, but he also was a bigot, or he would not have been the bosom friend of Lord Hillford; they had only one child, a lovely boy, not more than four years old. This family, which the reader has already seen at Northangle, had only come to settle their affairs in Ireland, before they set themselves down on a plan of œconomy in a neighbouring country, being of that common, but erroneous opinion, that a man cannot decently retrieve in his

his own ; and their business being settled about the time that Mrs. Pemberton occasioned so much uneasiness to Lady Hillford, she saw them depart with more regret, and testified such lively concern for the loss of their society to her Lord, as very greatly served to strengthen his hopes ; and when it was too late to recall the opportunity, made him wish that he had employed these favoured friends on the great work of her conversion.

Doctor Burnet's situation, in this divided family, became every day more and more insupportable. If Lord Hillford happened to pass by him, he passed him rudely, and with disdain :—his silence was haughty—his words uncivil—his air contemptuous—and his looks rage. Mrs. Pemberton made his Lordship's behaviour the model of her own, with additions : she did not even confine her dislike to him within the bounds

bounds of decency ; she took every occasion to reflect with bitterness, in his presence, on the whole body of protestant clergy ; and, to give her invectives the greater force, a flattering condescension marked her strong approbation of those Romish priests, to whom the doors of Lord Hillford were always opened, to train them, by exercise of hospitality, as useful auxiliaries reserved for future emergencies.

Personal insult, slights, and contempt, for the sake of his lovely charge, Doctor Burnet would have borne ; but where insult and contempt were often, and with malignity, levelled against his sacred function, patience would have disgraced the dignity of his soul, and silence been equally derogatory to the firmness of his character.—He desired a private conference with Mrs. Pemberton, for now he could never see her but in the presence of Lord Hillford :
she

she consulted with his Lordship and her ghostly father—they permitted the conference to take place; they spoke of it as an important crisis:—too much time had already, they said, been lost, and no decisive step taken; she was invested with full powers to make what declarations she pleased; many promises of Heaven, many solemn priestly benedictions, many charges to support the grandeur of her new faith, many grateful thanks and affectionate embraces from her noble nephew, inspired Mrs. Pemberton with more than mortal fortitude to meet the Doctor, who was forthwith summoned to her closet.

Well, sir, said she, without rising herself, or desiring him to be seated, I should be glad to know what are your commands with me.

Truly, madam, he replied, taking his place by her side on the sofa, I bring

no

no commands, I only wait upon you with a very humble petition.—I accepted a residence in this family, from the purest motives of friendship for Lord Uxington and fatherly affection for your niece; and I request to be informed by what part of my conduct I have forfeited your confidence and the confidence of Lord Hillford, that my function is reviled, my endeavours ill received, and that I am treated with less ceremony than the lowest creature in this house, who is dependent on his Lordship's bounty. He stopped speaking, to give her an opportunity of making a reply; which she eagerly seized, whilst her eyes darted asperity, and her countenance flamed with resentment.

Whatever were your motives for getting a footing in this house, sir, you force me to tell you, as the most proper guardian of my niece's temporal and eternal

eternal welfare, that it was exceedingly ill judged of my brother to place a dictator in Lord Hillford's family, merely to destroy the happiness which his daughter cannot *now* know independent of her husband, and to prevent her from seeing the errors by which we have all been so grossly misled, that, like me, she might have seasonably renounced them.

Your most obedient servant, madam, said the Doctor, who was not prepared for so open an avowal of her apostacy, though he long suspected it. He got up, and making his bows, I am answered, continued he, and would have retired ; but she stopped him—Pray return, Doctor Burnet, I have yet to deliver a message to you from my Lord, who, knowing you designed me the very great honour of a private visit, has desired me to signify that your officious intrusion on his family will be no longer acceptable

acceptable or permitted by his Lordship.

It is very well, madam, replied the divine, not in the least discomposed by her effrontery; pray tell my Lord, he had not more gratification in sending his commands, than I shall have in obeying them—but tell him also, he added, in a tone of reproach, which he meant should penetrate her soul, though it went no further than her ears—tell him, madam, that those who do not forsake their God, their God will not forsake them; to his protection, the piety and steady virtues of your niece will be solid recommendations; by sending me away, he removes but one feeble bar to his purpose, he must subvert the soul of an angel, before he can insure himself success. He turned on his heel, and went out with a sad heart to make his adieus where they would be less acceptable.

Enquiring for Lady Hillford, he was informed that she was gone out to air with my Lord : he patiently waited her return ; and when she came to seek him, her eyes were red and swollen. I do not, said she, throwing herself into a chair—I do not, my true and only friend, wish to disguise it from you, that my trials are begun, and my happiness at an end. Lord Hillford has deceived me—my aunt, too—all ! all !—I have no protector, no adviser, but you. My Lord has this day had the cruel candour—Oh, sir, I cannot tell you !—guess my situation, for I cannot explain it.

At this moment Lord Hillford came into the study. I should beg your pardon, Doctor Burnet, for this intrusion, said he, if I did not consider this room, though hitherto appropriated to your use, as much my own as any other in the house, particularly as I understand
you

you this very day mean to resign your right in it.

I do, my Lord, and only waited here to thank Lady Hillford for the honour I have received in being so long her spiritual director, and to know what are her Ladyship's commands to Lord Uxington.

Will you be so good, my dear, cried his Lordship with a sneer, immediately to signify what these commands are, that you may no longer be the occasion of detaining Doctor Burnet under my roof?

She looked at her cruel Lord :—How sweet, yet how full of terror was that look! Have the goodness, said she to Doctor Burnet, to tell my dear father I will never be unworthy of his affection :—that I have three distinct duties to perform—to my God, to my husband,

and to himself.—And, sinking down on her knees, her eyes drowned in tears, her hands clasped, tell him you have heard me vow to the Almighty, that none of these sacred duties shall be given up, infringed, or neglected.

It is enough, madam, said the Doctor, hardly able to speak, from a variety of emotions.

It is too much, retorted Lord Hillford with disdain. Lady Hillford, I am ready to attend you to your aunt. She presented him her hand, and he dragged her almost forcibly from the sight of him who had been a second parent to the unfortunate Isabella.

Lord Uxington, in a fortunate moment, had paid his debt to nature, about two hours before the arrival of Doctor Burnet at Uxington Lodge. The disorder by which he was snatched from
from

from the torments of knowing the miserable fate of his beloved daughter, happened so extremely sudden, that it was only two days preceding his death when he fixed on the following week for removing to town, in expectation of soon after being joined there by the darling of his heart, her lord, his sister-in-law, and his friend; — the latter had been prevailed on, at the urgent entreaties of Lady Hillford, not to disturb the repose of her family, by disagreeable communications, whilst surmises alone had as yet thrown shadows over the bright prospects of felicity, that invited her to wander so far from their protection. In all her letters to her father and brother, she had spoken so warmly in praise of her Lord, that the former quietly sunk into his grave, without any of those fears for the future fate of a tenderly beloved daughter, which must have embittered his passage from one life to another.

Lord

Lord Fitzhenry, now Lord Uxington, in the first paroxysm of affliction for the loss of his father—to see Doctor Burnet return—to hear from him the fate of a sister he adored—to look upon himself as the ostensible cause of her misery, in having presented to her a wretch so unworthy to be her husband, had nearly driven him to a state of distraction: he raved, he swore to take vengeance on the destroyer of his peace; and the instant he had performed the last filial office, he flew to execute what he thought to be equally indispensable, his fraternal duty.

On his arrival at Dublin, he did not go immediately to the house of his sister, for fear of alarming her; but sent a message to Lord Hillsford, as from a stranger who had business of importance to communicate to his Lordship, naming a distant coffee-house where he waited for a conference; but, what
was

was his grief, rage and despair, when informed by the waiter, who had been with the message, that Lord Hillford, his Lady and the whole family had that day embarked for England!—To England he followed them. He had a short passage, and was in London almost as soon as themselves. As he drove rapidly through the streets, the first person his eyes were fixed upon happened to be Lord Hillford, who was walking in solitary sadness, with looks cast on the ground. His Lordship called out to the postillions to stop; he burst open the door of the carriage with his foot, snatched up his sword, and sprang upon the pavement.

Lord Hillford started from his reverie, on hearing the high-raised voice of Lord Uxington demanding what he had done with his sister; and turning pale at the unexpected summons, he held out his hand, but was unable to speak.

His

His hand was rejected with scorn. I will not accept it, said the enraged brother of Lady Hillford, until I know whether you are the friend or the enemy of my family.

I will prove myself the former, answered her husband; and on that promise I expect a return of your confidence, though I have not, at present, an opportunity to explain myself.—Again he offered him his hand—again Lord Uxington drew his back. The explanation, said he, must come from my sister, I shall accept it from no other authority.

Dear Uxington, replied the arch deceiver, I see you have been imposed upon by the same villain who destroyed the harmony of my family: he has appeared to you, as he did to me, under a specious mask of hypocrisy; and, till you know him better, I forgive the
insult

insult he has occasioned me—My wife herself shall convince you of the injustice you have done my character, in believing the report of a designing, proud, malignant intermeddler.

Pardon me, my Lord, that I do not fix any of these opprobrious appellations on the person for whom you intend them ; it is from the attestation of my sister that I must know on what terms you and I are to meet in future.

Be it so, replied Lord Hillford ; but my wife, who has just now heard of the death of her father, is so extremely afflicted, that I cannot permit her to receive your visit sooner than the evening, or the shock of seeing you, unprepared, may be fatal to my peace for ever.

Name your hour, my Lord, said the brother, inflamed with resentment.

Seven, replied the husband with equal shortness; when each turning upon his heel, they took a different way; and Lord Uxington, punctual to the appointment, was five hours afterwards at the door of Lord Hillford, where, to his utter confusion, he understood that the whole family were on the road to Dover. He went after them as soon as a carriage could be got ready; but they had so much the start of him as to be out at sea before his arrival. He had left his own wife in the greatest state of anxiety; he therefore resolved to pursue them no farther, but to return, and patiently wait until he heard from his sister to what place her treacherous Lord had conveyed her.

Six months elapsed, no letter arrived; Lord Uxington had fallen sick, the torments of his frantic fears for the fate of Lady Hillford occasioned his disorder, and prevented him from beginning the
research

research he meditated. At length arrived a large packet—it contained several sheets, and he was transported to see them all filled with the writing of his beloved sister; he saw, too, that it was dated from Naples: his heart panted, his eyes were suffused with tears, he could read no further, and Lady Uxington having made herself mistress of the contents, at his own request, and afterwards by degrees divulged them to him, he ventured to go through the whole of Lady Hillford's affecting narrative, to which were annexed these lines on the envelope:—

“ I have at last met with the opportunity, so long waited for in vain. A discarded servant returning to Ireland, from whence my Lord hired him, takes the charge of my papers; he promises to deliver them, or cause them to be delivered in safety to your hands—

L. HILLFORD.”

Countess

*Countess of Hillford, to the Earl of Ux-
ington.*

London.

Oh! dearest brother! what anguish does it cost me to address you by the title of Uxington! Why are you not still Fitzhenry? and why am not I that happy Isabella, whose only shelter could be found in the bosom of her own family? From that I am torn, from that I am dragged, I fear for ever.—My cruel Lord, my more cruel aunt, assures me that I shall never see you again, and I write to you in all the bitterness of despair.

Dover.

The tremendous ocean lies before me :—it is the first time I have ever seen
it :

it:—how terrible it looks!—yet how friendly should I think it, would it but cover with its foaming billows the body of Isabella, and give her soul freedom, that it might follow her dear, her lamented father!

Paris.

I have been exceedingly ill since I came to this frightful country: they tell me it is a phrensy fever, and I believe my intellects have been disordered; for I have supposed my Lord to be affectionate, my aunt kind. Surely, surely, nothing but insanity could make me suppose it—they will not even let me write to you, my beloved brother—Is this affection, is this kindness?—I am never unwatched. Oh! you cannot conceive what stratagems I use for one single moment, to sketch a few hasty lines!—but how precious is that short

short moment which I can dedicate to you!

Paris.

Fitzhenry! dear Fitzhenry!—for it pains me to call you by any other name—do not forget, that, if I die a mother, my Lord has articled—Oh God! what did he not article! and how has he broken through all, all, all his articles!—Well, but you will remember, I say, that my dear child, should it come alive into the world, is not to be persecuted, as I have been persecuted. When I am gone, I give you leave to claim it; but as long as I live, Fitzhenry, my Lord shall not be molested on my account; myself I can consign to misery, but not my infant: The charge of my offspring devolves on you, Fitzhenry. My Lord will be forced by the laws of every country to make good his engagement:

to

to Heaven and equity leave the justice of our cause, but lift not up your hand.

Paris.

Lift not up your hand, I charge you, against the life of my husband, the husband of my choice, the father of my infant—Oh, Fitzhenry! whoever aims a blow at him is more than the murderer of your sister! and whoever would attempt to separate me from Lord Hillford, must be the enemy of Isabella's honour, and could not be the friend of her peace. No, my vows are passed to Heaven, nothing but its own welcome mandate shall ever divorce me from Lord Hillford.

Paris.

Paris.

What have I written to you, my dear brother!—I will not look it over, lest in the cooler moments of reflection I should repent of laying my heart open before you—It is necessary you should know my misery, that you may not accuse me of unkindness; I will blot out nothing, therefore, that I have written, but remember, that, whilst I tell you I am not happy, I also tell you, I should feel every arrow of resentment my friends could level against my Lord, more pungently, than if it was to pierce through my own bosom.

Paris.

My Lord has just told me that we leave Paris in three days: I am almost
sorry

sorry for it ; we have already been here six weeks : the latter half of that time has been much more supportable than the former. Long before I left Ireland ; long before that venerable friend, to whose instruction I am indebted for the firmness of those principles which I hope never to disgrace ; long before my trials were commenced, I dreaded the unworthy treatment to which he would be exposed, if I complained to him of my persecution : Indeed I was persecuted even then, yet I did not complain—but I was going to tell you why I am sorry to leave Paris.

Paris.

The priests I had to combat with in Ireland, privately introduced to me under the immediate authority of my husband,—those despicable men, so eager to work out my conversion,—
were

were illiterate, cruel, overbearing.— Here, I am also surrounded by priests ; but of quite another description : they are learned, gentle, liberal—they think me in an error, they have the goodness to take much pains to reason me out of it, and do not treat me with the less respect or tenderness, because I am not to be persuaded. Have I not reason then to be sorry, that I am so soon to leave those good men, when it is so uncertain into what hands I may fall next ?

Naples.

I have, my dear brother, been suspected of writing to you ; a stain of ink, which I did not observe on my finger, betrayed me : but this paper escaped detection, I always conceal it in my bosom, and there my aunt neglected to search for it. However, it has
put

put me more on my guard : this is the reason I have not been daring enough to add one line in all the time that our long and disagreeable journey has lasted. —I draw near that season, when, if I die, you will be called upon to discharge the duties of a father to the infant I shall leave behind me. Dear Fitzhenry, remember my former injunctions ; love the child, but hate not the father.

Naples.

I have felt, dearest Fitzhenry, the transports of a mother ! How dear the delight to my soul, yet, oh ! with what tortures have I paid for the transient blessing—I am no longer a parent—I do not arraign the justice or the mercy of Divine Providence—it is better for us both ; for had she lived, to what a dreadful alternative was I reduced !—

Abjure

Abjure your errors, madam ; embrace my faith, or take leave of your child for ever.—Yes, my brother, my angel babe smiled in the arms of her father, as he held out the distressing choice to her distracted mother. Do you think I did not hesitate between them ? Ah ! much longer than I should have done, had all the instruments of torture been that moment exposed to my view—I thought of the vow I had made to Heaven and my father, in the presence of Doctor Burnet ; my strength of mind returned, I submitted to be miserable rather than guilty.

Naples.

I saw my child no more, I heard she was ill, but was not permitted to visit her : my sufferings, which were concealed from all the world, were revealed to Heaven ; thither my angel was transported—

ported—her fate is a happy one—I am more than resigned—I am contented.—My aunt, who is a devotee of the most inflammable description, was so overwhelmed with grief for the enlargement of my now happy infant, that she has left me, and is gone into a nunnery, I do not know where. She was so much enraged with what she calls my obstinacy, that I am never to be acquainted with any of her movements, till I have renounced my errors : on these terms, I told her, we should meet no more in this world.—Would you believe it possible, Fitzhenry, that this aunt, who once doated on your Isabella, could leave her for ever, without one embrace, one tear, one tender adieu !—If this be christianity, dearest brother, what then is savage unenlightened paganism ?

Here the narrative broke off abruptly, the reason for which was easily to be

be accounted for, by the few lines hastily scratched on the envelope.

Lord Uxington would have set out immediately for Italy, to redress or avenge the wrongs of his oppressed sister; but Doctor Burnet, who gloried in his saint-like pupil, found in her own sweet and christian remonstrances, arguments sufficiently strong to vanquish this fatal resolution; though not till after the first paroxysm of his stormy passions had subsided. — This gracious divine did more: he prevailed on the exasperated Lord Uxington to make compassion for his sister's miserable lot the funeral pile on which he sacrificed, or seemed to sacrifice, the resentment he bore to her traitor Lord. — How, said Doctor Burnet, without some condescension from your Lordship, shall we be ever informed of the glorious victim's fate, or even of her existence? She is not suffered to write to you; she
will

will not be permitted to receive your letters; she has forbidden ungentle methods to be used for her redress; palliative measures will assuage her anguish, and, perhaps, soften the rigid austerity of her inhuman husband.—Lord Uxington consented to make the trial, and immediately wrote a very polite, civil letter to his brother-in-law, which conveyed neither blame, censure, nor reproaches; but expressed much anxiety that his sister did not seem to remember she had left friends behind her in Britain, who could not be happy, unless they were frequently informed of her health and welfare; beseeching her Lord would dive into the cause of her long and extraordinary silence, that, whether it proceeded from the mode by which her letters were sent, or her own neglect in preparing them, such measures might be taken in future to prevent similar disappointments, as to leave
him

him no room to complain of their supposed unkindness.

Such an epistle could not fail of effecting the end for which it was intended. Lord Hillford, pleased that his Lady had given no intelligence to her brother, treated her afterwards with more gentleness, even where his favourite inclination was concerned ; which, though he would never relinquish it, he seldom urged with his accustomed, cruelty. He permitted her every six months to write to Lord Uxington, but first exacted her word of honour, which she religiously observed, on no account whatever to send him a single line that had not undergone his inspection and received his approbation.

Having ended with some of the most material circumstances in the calamitous life of Lady Hillford, the unfortunate sister of Lord Uxington, it is time we should

should return to the exclusive affairs of himself and family; because we left them rather abruptly, in favour of my little episode, to scramble out their way over the Welch mountains, without my being at all concerned in their accommodation on the road. I have since heard they had a mighty agreeable, safe journey, and am content to meet them again at the gates of Uxington Lodge, to which their equipages are just drove up, loaded with luggage, splashed with dirt, the Earl sleeping—Lord Fitzhenry thinking—Lady Uxington silent—Elizabeth contemplating the rising moon—Jemima chattering—the women attendants yawning—the horses jaded, and their riders fagged.

At the age of ninety-two, and in the vicinity of the Lodge, vegetated in his easy chair, to which his infirmities confined him, the venerable Dr. Burnet, who, it may be remembered, was an

old man when he first made his appearance in the history of Lady Hillford. His attachment to the Uxington family was so truly paternal, and their affection for him so fervently filial, that neither party would have found themselves comfortable had any considerable distance divided them. Lord Uxington, after his return from Ireland, strenuously insisted on his taking up his abode with him : this the Doctor as strenuously refused to accept ; but with his Lordship's permission he built himself a small box in the cottage style on a beautiful knoll, which fronted the south, and stood in a sheltered corner of his extensive park, where he could receive the daily visits of his friends, when he was no longer able to visit them.

Lord and Lady Uxington sent to enquire how he did, the instant they stepped from their carriage ; and the next morning, before any but themselves

selves were stirring, the young ladies, attended by a servant, tripped across the park to see their dear old grand-papa; for so they had from infancy been accustomed to call Dr. Burnet, whom they found at nine o'clock eating his milk breakfast; and, in expectation of his early visitors, his arms expanded: they ran into them; it was spring rising from the bosom of winter.

Lady Elizabeth sat down by his side, and Jemima at his feet on a small tent-stitch stool, which she had worked for him, that he might rest his feet on it when they were weary: so turning her back to the door, her face to the Doctor, her elbows fixed on her knees, and her eyes on his face, she began to prattle away, not forgetting to tell the delighted old man every thing that had happened, every thing that had been done, and almost every thing that had been said since she last saw him; but

when she came to speak of Lady Owen, and Miss Clarinda, she started from her seat, taking off both mother and daughter with such inimitable humour, that the Doctor, who had done much heretofore to blot this trait of mimicry from the catalogue of her very few imperfections, found himself obliged to utter a sort of groan, as if it had proceeded from some sudden attack of violent pain, that she might not perceive how much he was entertained by the exertions of those dangerous powers she had so often heard him condemn.

What is the matter, grandpapa? said she. Come, come, you must not be angry with me this once; I know you feel no pain, and that you are ready to die with laughing, though you groan so terribly. Stand up, Elizabeth, and make believe you are my brother, that I may shew grandpapa how they persecuted poor Fitzhenry—Well, if you will

will not take the trouble to rise from your seat, sit where you are—it is quite the same thing; for they made love to him sitting, standing, and in all sorts of attitudes. She then began in the whispering accents of Lady Owen:—I hope, my Lord, your Lordship have not got no cold with dancing—it would be a thousand pities that young gentlemen and young ladies, who dance so well as your Lordship and Miss Owen, should ever get cold. My Lady and I agree, that there never was seen in any exhibition no finer a couple than you two, and so well matched in all respects; but the highest rank, and the greatest fortunes, will be *inconvenienced* like the grosser part of *creation*, if they don't, like other folks, take care to keep well when they are well; so I desire, Miss Owen, you don't let my Lord sit no longer with a winder in his face, and a door at his back.

What

What is that you are rehearsing, mad-cap? cried Lord Fitzhenry, who came upon them by surprise,

Ah! said she, as he paid his compliments to the Doctor, affecting the languishing airs and tones of Clarinda—Ah! I am killed with fatigue—I wonder, my Lord, how it is possible your charming sisters, who look so delicate, are able to take such long walks. Come, brother, why do you not answer, and help me off with the farce?

Pish! replied Fitzhenry.

His Lordship had only preceded the Earl and Countess by a moment, and as he pronounced the emphatical *pish*, they made their appearance, so that Jemima had only time to retort the *pish*, which she did with much archness; adding, What in the world is come over you

you and Elizabeth, that you are both grown so wonderfully solemn?

The father of Israel blessing his pious offspring, is an original, of which Dr. Burnet, surrounded by the Uxington family, might be called a lively copy : besides his blessing, he gave them a good breakfast, and appeared at least twenty years younger for their society. His cook made excellent rolls, and the delighted guests did honour to her performance. Lady Uxington with her daughters afterwards returned to the Lodge, and the gentlemen continued some time longer in conversation with their hospitable entertainer.

Dr. Burnet highly approved the plan of Lord Fitzhenry's proceeding to the continent early in spring, rather than wasting a year or two at the university, where, the old gentleman very flatteringly assured him, he could attain to

no further improvement in the scholastic part of education, than that to which by application and good understanding he was already arrived.

Our greatest difficulty, said the Earl, will be to fix on a proper travelling companion.

Would your son like a friend or a governor to attend him? asked the divine.

A friend, replied Fitzhenry with eagerness—I can submit every thing to friendship, but very little to authority; and if I am wrong, my dear father must be content that my error should glance back on himself, because, if I am misled in preferring the soft reins of love to the hard ones of duty, it is his own goodness to me that has taught me to do so.

Lord

Lord Uxington stretched out his hand—Fitzhenry pressed it to his lips with reverence and affection—It is difficult to determine whether the actors in this short scene, or the spectator of it, was the most apparently gratified. Would to God, said the Earl, my friend, that you were no more than forty or fifty!

I understand you, my dear Lord—If it was not for these grey hairs, and worn out limbs, I should be proud of the office you would do an old man the honour to appoint him; but as it is, I think I may be useful in proposing a substitute.

Name him, name him! was the double exclamation—I will take no other recommendation, said Lord Uxington—I will have no other friend, said Fitzhenry—where you repose your confidence, I never shall refuse to deposit mine.

K 3

I will

I will tell you who it is I mean, in six days, said the Doctor. Next Thursday if you do me the honour to call at my cottage, I shall present him to you; for, till he is fortunate enough to be approved of by Lord Uxington, and till I am sure you will like each other for future associates, I shall not venture to speak of such an alliance to either party.

But cannot you bring us together sooner than Thursday, my dear sir? asked Fitzhenry.—Impossible! replied the Doctor; I must send for him from Nottinghamshire, where he is gone to visit his friends; nor shall I tell him why he is summoned back so soon, having left me but ten days, till he has passed his examination. I am guilty of this reserve for both your sakes, that you, my Lord, might not think yourself obliged to honour my recommendation, if you should not happen to like the subject of it;

it; and on his account, that your Lordship might judge fairly of his merits, I am unwilling to throw a veil of diffidence over them, by telling him how much of his happiness may possibly depend on this first interview.

Ah! cried Fitzhenry with vivacity, have I your leave, sir, to guess at the name of this gentleman? and, if I guess right, I am sure there will be no objection on our side of the question.

Fitzhenry, said his father, our good friend must not be oppressed with your overbearing curiosity; if you are so eager in your pursuit of a friend, what will be your impetuosity when it happens that you are in search of a mistress?

At this question the ardency of Lord Fitzhenry forsook him; the divine image of Miss Melmoth smote his bosom,

son, and coloured his cheeks with a dye deeper than crimson: but this change on his countenance passed unobserved, as he had the address to turn from his father, and stammer out something, which, if it meant any thing, was a hesitating apology, where he would have thought it unnecessary if this trifling accident had not made him of another opinion.

Lord Uxington looked at his watch—he saw with surprise that it was already past the Doctor's dinner-hour, and hastened out of the house, leaning on the arm of his son. As they strolled through the park, he asked him, who was the person he surmised to be the subject of Dr. Burnet's recommendation? and Miss Melmoth being pushed further from his face, though nearer to his heart, he was able to make a very rational sort of answer.

Lord

Lord Fitzhenry put his father in mind of Sir William Courtenay's sons, who were great-nephews to Doctor Burnet, the eldest of whom he intended for his heir, and asked, if he did not think it likely that it might be one of those gentlemen to whom he alluded? The Earl agreed that it was extremely probable one of the younger brothers would be the person: I think it is impossible it can be Mr. Courtenay, said he, for he has been already five years on his travels, and I have heard him spoken of as the most accomplished young man of the age.

The principal gardener at the Lodge, who had been pruning in the Doctor's garden, happened to pass by them at this moment: he pulled off his hat, and kept at a respectful distance—I can know of Frank, cried Lord Fitzhenry, what young men have been at the cottage since we were away—He was immediately

mediately called over, and the question asked him—Please your Lordship, answered Frank, there have been nobody at old Master's save young 'Squire Courtenay, his kinsman, who is just come from beyond seas, and, as I heard say amongst the servants, is going back again in a little time. Very well, said Fitzhenry; and as he walked on with his father, they congratulated each other on the certainty, as it now appeared to them, that it was really the eldest son of Sir William Courtenay, whom Dr. Burnet had fixed upon to be the associate of his travels. Such a discovery could not but elate them both exceedingly; for though he was personally unknown to them, his general character, and the partial favour his uncle had often declared for this beloved nephew, filled them with the most agreeable prepossessions, which were more than realized when at the appointed time they were presented to each other.

Mr.

Mr. Courtenay was full twenty-seven ; his face and figure remarkably attractive, his mind sedate, his turn rather grave than gay, his understanding highly cultivated, and his judgment ripened by experience. His predilection for foreign climes had made him very much a stranger in his own country, not from ill digested preference given to the inhabitants of any other, but from his passion for natural history, to the study of which he had early attached himself ; and, finding his enquiries better gratified abroad than at home, was the only cause of his seeming defection : for had the same cabinets been displayed to him in England, as were opened to him in other countries, the former would have carried his inclinations against all competitors.

It had long been the wish of his family, but more the desire of those single ladies who had seen *him*, or was acquainted

quainted with them, that he should enter into a serious engagement: he had hitherto evaded the remonstrances of one party, by assuring them he only waited for the consent of his heart; and as to the other, far from being insensible to their desires, he saw them but too plainly; and instead of being tempted by offered favours, he resolved to go through the world till he could meet with a wife whose reserve might engage his pursuit, or to go out of it without one: he judged the intrinsic worth of women on the same principle by which he estimated that of inanimate curiosities; he did not think the gem which is always exposed in a show-glass, could demand so much attention, or be of equal value with those jewels, which are only displayed to the eyes of taste, and the sight of which is not attainable without that sort of difficulty so necessary to heighten the lustre of a common-
 year.

Not a day passed in which the young folks of the Lodge did not visit the old man of the cottage, who forgot, in their presence, that he was either old or disabled. Lady Elizabeth read to him, whilst his placid eyes would fix with delight on the sportive Jemima, who played as many tricks as there are in a squirrel to divert him.

I wish, said she to him one day, that you wore a wig, sir—not but these sweet silver hairs, stroking them with her fair hands over his forehead, are much more beautiful!

Then why do you wish that I should exchange them for a wig, my dear child?

Because I once put one on my own head, and I want to shew you what a little monster I am.—Well, said he, if your Ladyship chooses to be rather a monster

monster of your own making, than a well-finished work of nature, Timothy can supply you with a new black one, which he has not yet put on his head, as it came home but this morning.—Oh dear! that will do exactly, said she, black is the very colour; only, grand-papa, be so good to desire he will favour me with it for five minutes, but do not tell him for what use I want it.—Timothy was called, the wig produced; she threw off her hat, the cap followed, and she ran to the glass, before which she fixed it, and buried under its stiff raven unpowdered curls, as much of her bright luxuriant tresses as could be concealed, which was not more than one half the quantity nature had furnished her with; the rest strayed over her beautiful forehead and cheeks. Thus transformed, she cried out, Are you prepared, sir, to see the ugliest thing you ever saw in your life? but don't scream, for I know I shall fright-
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en you : and turning suddenly towards him, a door immediately opposite as suddenly opened, and she saw the eyes of the handsomest man her own ever beheld, fixed upon her face, over which modesty cast her most becoming mantle ; and shame made her rush by the stranger with a precipitancy, nothing but shame itself could have inspired.—Lady Elizabeth, who felt for her sister's confusion, followed her out more collectedly graceful, though hardly less agitated : the hat and and cap which Jemima had thrown on the carpet were fetched away by a servant, and neither of the ladies made their appearance before the doctor any more that morning.

On their return to the Lodge, poor Jemima, with tears in her eyes, complained to her father and mother of the terrible disaster that had befallen her, wishing the stranger was a thousand miles away : her happiness was spoilt
for

for she did not know how long a time, but supposed he was come to stay long enough, by the baggage she observed the servants taking from a carriage; and never, no never whilst he stayed in the neighbourhood would she shew her face, or ever put on a black wig again as long as she lived.

There was such an air of drollery attended the rehearsal of her distress, as occasioned no small diversion to those before whom she rehearsed it: and her brother, who just then came into the room, surprised to find even the gentle Elizabeth joined in a laugh, of which it was evident Jemima was the ostensible cause, was presently let into the dreadful secret of the black wig; when, with a grave look which seemed still more to disconcert the unfortunate sufferer, he said, he was extremely sorry for the accident, as he felt a sort of *presentiment*, that the stranger who had surprised her

was

was no other than his destined fellow-traveller, who had arrived one day before he was expected, and having seen such a specimen of family derangement, it was possible he might have objections to the company of any one of its members. However, added he, to convince him there are still some of us that are in our right senses, suppose my dear father you and I go and shew ourselves? —With all my heart, said the Earl: and remember, Mima, this dreaded stranger will, if we can prevail, certainly dine with you to day; so prepare the black wig for his reception, that your face may not be entirely unknown to him when he sees you again.—She ran after them, begged and prayed that she might not be exposed to so great a mortification. However, when dinner was announced, and she had seen from the window this terrible creature walking up the park, between her father and brother, her first appearance before them,

them, though beautified by all the charms of bashfulness, must have convinced her whole family, that whilst she sat at her toilet her thoughts had been more employed on the adjustment of a cap, than on the horrid disguise of a black wig.

Mr. Courtenay very soon made himself a more than common interest in the confidence of the whole Uxington family: what his sentiments were of them, time will discover. He intended his visit should be limited to three days, but for some reason or other he lengthened it to three weeks, and even then made his adieus with regret. Doctor Burnet saw with joy the rapid growth of friendship, in minds so prepared for maturing it as those of Fitzhenry and Courtenay; nor did the new friends separate before every thing was concluded on for their excursion to the Continent, their route marked out, their retinues settled,

settled, the time for their setting out fixed, and their return at the end of two years stipulated. Besides which, Mr. Courtenay promised to spend part of the following winter with Lord Uxington, at his town house, which made them all sincerely wish winter was advancing with a quicker pace, that they might see him again in London, when they could no longer see him in the country.

There is an old saying by which we are told, that it may be possible to have too much of a good thing: this may be retorted against me for any hope I have to escape censure, should I presume to keep my polite readers much longer, by force or persuasion, in the stupid country, where I have nothing to regale their fatigued senses but plain and, perhaps to many of them, unpalatable fare of domestic love, domestic comfort, domestic felicity, and such odd out-of-the-

the-way messes, for which it is impossible to suppose those who have never tasted them can have any sort of appetite, or will even sit down contented, because others think them the only luxuries that it is worth living for. These humdrum souls, so deficient in modern taste and modern elegance, will not be displeased, if we leave them to feast after their own manner: and the lovers of ton will not be dissatisfied that I sink two months at the lodge in absolute silence, to fly away at the end of that given time into the regions of fashion, with the whole Uxington family seated on my pinions.

The month in which I have taken my airy flight is December, and going on the same pursuit I meet a hundred others as visionary as myself, perhaps more so; for I know that I am dreaming, but my fellow travellers believe themselves to be awake. It is no matter,
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we are all travelling the same way, and with the same object in view—amusement, dear amusement! some with light hearts, some with heavy hearts, and some with no hearts at all; such is the general description of those who, like us, are posting on to the grand mart of dissipation.

I set down my pretty cargo in Piccadilly, just as the balls, assemblies, operas, plays, concerts, and suppers are beginning to bring people together who never desire to meet on any other occasion; when design creeps into the heart, and confusion mounts up to the head; when young women are told by their mothers, at whom it will be prudent they should aim the artillery of their charms, and the young men instructed by their fathers into what families it will be most convenient for them to marry. All this preparation could be nothing to Lady Elizabeth or

Lady Jemima; they were neither of them to be presented that winter:—but it was a great deal to their brother; for no sooner had he shewn his handsome person at the levee and drawing-room, than cards of invitation flowed in upon him from all possible quarters.



Lord Fitzhenry, whether it gratified him or not to be so highly distinguished, was adopted the idol of fashion; whatever he wore was followed, whatever he said repeated, whatever he did admired; he was the grand object pointed out by prudent parents, as a most desirable alliance—All the Lady Lucys, Lady Emmas, and Lady Marys were directed by their mammas, as well as their own inclinations, to besiege the heart of Lord Fitzhenry—he was delightful—his fortune must be immense.—his father and mother old-fashioned folks—lived with œconomy—spent no money—could not long keep him out of

of it—his sisters young things—had not been brought out—moped away their existence in the country—may die of the vapours—or if they lived and married fox-hunting squires, five thousand pounds to each would do mighty well where there was no rank to be supported. Such were the calculations made in all houses where a titled daughter was to be disposed of: the consequence in his Lordship's favour was extremely natural; splendid dinners and fine suppers were as common in the environs of St. James's, as bad dinners or no dinners at all are where only the sons and daughters of poverty have their dwelling.

Fitzhenry accepted with avidity all, or as many as he could fulfil, of the invitations which daily multiplied upon him—The thorn that rankled in his bosom must be extracted, and he had resolution enough to try all sort of remedies, yet found none—he ran after

every shadow that put on the appearance of pleasure, and when he had overtaken the phantom, what was it, but disappointment!—The reality of pleasure, where could it be met with?—No where, but in the very image which, whilst he cherished it in his heart, he strove to banish from his thoughts—it was the image of Miss Melmoth.

He very often dined at a certain great house in a certain great square, where it was hoped and expected he would one time or other offer the sacrifice of some serious gallantry; but he, too honourable to make love in jest, and less disposed to offer it in earnest, had sometimes felt himself in a very awkward predicament, how to decline with politeness the part he was expected to perform. At a dinner of this festive kind, which is generally given with intentions of providing for their families by more ways than one, the conversation,

tion, by design or accident, happened to turn on love and marriage, when the Duchess of Radstock, who presided, pressed so many questions on Fitzhenry, as to the state of his affections, attended with such plain approving glances directed towards her very pretty daughter, whom she had placed by his side, insisting that he should sit between them, as might have disconcerted his Lordship, had he been less prepared for the attack, having long wished to find some favourable opportunity when he might civilly declare his visits were totally without design.

It is enough, Madam, said he, that your Grace commands me to avow the condition of my heart, its situation is not to be envied—her Grace smiled:—Six months it has groaned in captivity—her Grace frowned:—His acquaintance in her family had been of a much shorter date—Oh! I understand you, she

she cried, you have fallen in love with one of your tenants daughters; but that is not the sort of attachment we are talking of, neither will it prevent your success with people of your own rank when you begin to think more seriously.

There were a dozen other young men present, besides Fitzhenry, who gave it against him, and applauded her Grace's liberality of sentiments; none were silent, all praised the encouraging observation.

No, madam, continued he, I am less fortunate than you seem to imagine; had it been a light attachment, or one by which I had supposed myself degraded, do you think I should have boasted of my weakness, or offended your Grace with my ill-timed confidence?

Well then, said she, trying to hide
her

her discontent under a smile, we are to understand, my Lord, that with all your attractions, you are a disappointed lover—Pray does the Earl know any thing of this mighty early engagement?

It is no engagement, madam; I have therefore never named it to my father: the lady who will ever have a lasting claim to my affections, is unconscious of her power over them; she knows nothing of my presumption, fate has placed an insuperable bar between us.

Come, said she, I shall ask you no more questions now—I see that you are growing serious, and I am a declared enemy to gravity in young men; so if you follow me to the opera, let it be with a cheerful countenance.

The ladies withdrawn, the gentlemen who remained behind, in hopes of getting out of Fitzhenry more of his secret than

than he had, or than it was necessary he should disclose, encountered him briskly with champaign, which had no other effect than to make him obey the injunctions of her Grace, whose box he entered at the conclusion of the last act, gay, inconsiderate, and perfectly enchanting : it was a box of considerable size, but so crowded with the followers of beauty and good cheer, that when Fitzhenry opened the door, he was going to shut it again, and would actually have gone to another, if he had not heard himself called by her Grace, who told him she kept a place for him. With some difficulty he got down to the front row, and occupied exactly the same situation he had the honour to fill at her table: the ladies never saw him before to so much advantage, his old love seemed to be forgot, his indifference vanquished, his gallantry revived; he uttered nothing but *bon mots*; he smiled, ogled, played with their fans, did

did and said every thing that he would not have done or said if he had not drank the last bottle of champaign.

Having run down one subject after another, he looked upon the stage for a new one; but the stage was empty, the opera was over, and the dance not begun; he therefore, in a fit of despair, sent his fine eyes wandering round the house, in hopes to fix on an object that would inspire him with something to say which he had not said before, when, by the oddest fatality in the world, he settled them on Miss Clarinda Owen, who sat in Lady Fenton's box, directly over against him; he looked to make himself sure that it was her, and being convinced of her identity acknowledged her by a very gracious bow, which she as graciously returned, at the same time drawing out a smelling bottle, and applying it as if to recover from the sur-

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prize and pleasure the sight of him had occasioned.

Neither the Duchefs or Lady Betty seemed to take any notice of this manœuvre, though not a look or motion had escaped their observation; and when he asked leave of absence for a moment, to shew himself to some friends he had just found out, they made room for him to pass, whilst their whole attention was directed to the box into which they expected to see him enter, and were not disappointed; which was by no means a reason why they should not be dissatisfied. Dissatisfied they were, for they saw what was not calculated to give them pleasure—they saw Lord Fitzhenry gaze with rapture, and speaking with animated eagerness to a very fine woman, with whose face they were unacquainted, and very naturally concluded she could be no other than the fortunate enslaver of his affections :
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the smelling bottle—the lady's languishing glances—Fitzhenry's haste to go into her box—his looks—his joy—his animation amounted to proof positive, that this meeting had been pre-concerted; and when he joined them again, his devoirs hardly appeared, to their mortified vanity, worth receiving.

Miss Owen, it must be allowed, in point of figure and face, if she had not been over-run with the weeds of folly and affectation, might have commanded the admiration of one sex, and created envy in the other. On the night of this accidental meeting, she looked so irresistibly lovely, that the elevated Fitzhenry not only paid a visit to her across the house, but very kindly invited her to Piccadilly, and put her in mind of the many pleasant days they spent together at Mount-clear, in a language so like small talk as sent the poor girl home intoxicated with ideal consequence,

quence, and, what she had before scarce ventured to believe, that she had gained a complete conquest over the heart of Lord Fitzhenry.

Pray, my Lord, said her lively Grace of Radstock, by far more lively than her daughter, pray be so good to inform me, what young body is that whom my Lady Fenton has picked up as her opera companion.

Her name, he said, was Owen; the father had been knighted, the mother was a widow, and the daughter an heiress.

Oh! cried she, give yourself no further trouble, I beseech you; for if these are the people that Lord Fenton borrows his money of, and then forces them down the throats of his acquaintances, because he cannot pay interest for it, I know from report all that I
boxin ever

ever desire to know of the Owen family—The box keeper prevented her saying more, by bringing word that the chairs were ready; and, as Lord Fitzhenry led her out, she observed with a sneer, she was sorry to detain him from offering his services to the *knight's* daughter. Excuse me, added she, but when we meet next, you must positively tell me where to look for that *insuperable* bar which threatens to divide you from so charming a creature. I shall be sorry if you are abashed at looking up to so great, so very great an alliance: indeed, my Lord, such humility would disgrace the whole peerage.—Fitzhenry smiled: he saw the mistake into which her Grace had hobbled, and would not lend her any assistance to get her out of it. More than once he had repented of his open declaration in regard to the state of his heart—he had declared himself a lover, without considering how likely it was, the company being so mixed,

mixed, that this news might get to the ears of his family. He was therefore glad to let the inquisitive lady's suspicions rest on Miss Owen, as he had nothing to fear from domestic enquiries on her account: but would not have chosen that they should have been directed towards the developement of his hidden treasure,—that dear and dangerous passion which still more and more oppressed him, though he tried all lawful means to get rid of its burthen; sleep was an enemy to his best endeavours, he ceased then to be master of his own resolution, he was governed by fantasies, and these fantasies were full of Miss Melmoth.

The next morning he communicated his *rencontre* with Miss Owen at the opera to his mother and sisters, and entreated them to call at the door of Lady Owen: For I have been so inconsiderate, said he, as to ask the pretty
Clarinda

Clarinda to come and see you, which must strike her as a freedom I had no right to use, if you have not the condescension to give it another colouring.

Lady Uxington, replied, they were people she did not very much approve, had no intention of supporting the acquaintance accident had thrown in her way; however, as he desired it, she would sacrifice a small portion of her time to the good work of mending his blunders, but hoped in future he would not find her out any more such employments. He kissed her hands, expressed his gratitude, and promised reformation. Elizabeth and Jemima were transported with this arrangement, they had seen nothing like them since they came to town, they longed for a renewal of the same sort of diversion they once enjoyed at Lady Owen's expence,—and joined their brother's solicitations, that the

the visit might be made as soon as possible.

The mother was not quite so eager as her daughters for this addition to her society; and, whilst they were debating whether it should be a call or a name visit, whether a week hence might not be quite soon enough for either; in all which considerations the Countess being decidedly out-voted, was graciously yielding up her own to the will of her children, when two servants came into the room, each bearing a jar, which required the strength of a porter to lift, and setting them down, said, that a lady had put them out of her carriage at the door, with orders to convey them immediately to her Ladyship, with Lady and Miss Owen's compliments, who would have done themselves the pleasure of coming out then, but would certainly call again, by the time people of fashion began to receive their visitors.

Lady

Lady Uxington smiled, Fitzhenry roared,—Elizabeth could have joined in his laugh, but, shocked that any human being should be exposed by example to the ridicule of domestics, she put a check on his mirth, or at least gave it another appearance, by saying, that it was impossible she could give any credit to the droll adventure he had been relating. Jemima, whom at any other time it would have been more difficult to restrain, than even to silence the mirth of Fitzhenry, was now so full of curiosity to see what the jars contained, that she thought of nothing else but getting a peep into them, as soon as the covers by order of her mother were removed; when seeing one of them filled with tamarinds, the other with sweet-meats, and both happening to suit her ladyship's palate, she cried out, the servant being dismissed, Pray, mamma, let up these dear delightful West Indian foreigners, whenever they call, their acquaintance

acquaintance will afford me a great deal of sweet——

She was interrupted, the door opened, Lord Fitzhenry coloured; the Duchesse of Radstock, Lady Betty and Lady Di' Westbrook were announced; he dreaded the raillery of her Grace, and had no predilection for entertaining her daughters.

I believe, said she, I surprise you all with my early appearance, but you are enough to make one in love with family hours and rural felicity; but how do you contrive, my dear Lady Uxington, to make that tall son of yours confine himself at home with his mother and sisters? I should be glad to learn your art, for I have no such influence over my boys.

Indeed you do Fitzhenry a great deal of injustice, madam, returned the Countess,

Countess, if you accuse him of devoting those hours to his family, which fashionable pursuits have any claim upon; I think it has seldom happened, that I see so little of him as I have seen since we came to town this winter.

Fitzhenry felt the gentle reproof, and, conscious he had deserved it, assured his mother, with an expression of countenance equally gay and tender, that he planned a serious reform, and would give her no more reason of complaint against him.

I always look for good husbands, said the broad-hinting Duchess, amongst respectful sons and polite brothers, and am for ever teaching my young folks the same lesson; but that is nothing to my present purpose, we are going to a review in Hyde-Park, will you allow me to take Lady Elizabeth and Lady Jemima with my girls?

Lady

Lady Uxington, with a great deal of politeness, declined, for her daughters, the honour of attending her Grace, as such an indulgence would interfere with their studies.

Your Ladyship is perfectly right, said she, I do exactly so with my girls, I never suffer them to be idle till I bring them out; but there is no such excuse for your son, he positively must and shall escort us, or I will never forgive him.

That would be a dreadful sentence; for heaven's sake do not pronounce it! said Fitzhenry: my heart will certainly follow your Grace, but personally I am engaged, unfortunately, indispenably engaged, the whole of this morning.

Mortified, piqued, and angry, she rose from her seat, and turning to her daughters, who were talking very busily

to

to Elizabeth and Jemima, a little group that seemed mutually pleased with each other, she said to them, still keeping on her her mask of good humour, Come, girls, I am sorry to tear you from your charming young friends; but, indeed if we stay longer, we shall be too late; I must look out for some body who will have the *compassion* to take care of us, since Lord Fitzhenry is so *unfortunately*, so *indispensably* engaged — She had made her curtsy, and walked towards the door, when suddenly she was again seated, saying, she had changed her mind, and would not go to the review, adding in a whisper directed to Fitzhenry, I fancy your Lordship would rather that I should take myself off, but you must excuse me, for I am determined to stay and see what sort of creatures they are — it was the name of Owen which preceded by half a minute the ladies who bore it, that had caused the revolution in her Grace's intentions,

intentions, and made her direct her last satirical speech to the supposed lover of one of them.

Lady Uxington, was chagrined, her son provoked, the young ladies vexed that they dropped in at a crisis so malapropos, and the least misfortune they apprehended was, that both the mother and daughter would be, for many succeeding days, the ridicule of every circle which the great lady honoured with her presence ; a sentiment that did not proceed from pride, but benevolence, nor from shame on their own accounts, but fear for their visitors, who they were pretty certain would be exposed, even if they did or said nothing to expose themselves. These kind apprehensions went still farther ; it was possible they might not escape the airs of insolent superiority and barbarous witticism of the present moment, from which the sacred rights of hospitality might

might be unable to protect them : what then was the pleasure and surprise of the whole little family group, when they had given the Owens a very gracious reception, to see her Grace make up to them with as much easy affability as she would have done to ladies of her own acquaintance, or friends of her own choosing!

Lady Owen, at first, did not take more than her share in the conversation; she had felt herself a little overawed by the presence of a stranger, whose title was something to which she had been hitherto unaccustomed, which made her extremely cautious of speaking much, for fear she should betray the very great joy she could not but feel at getting higher and higher up the ladder of preferment: to be taken notice of by a Duchess, was more than her weak head could bear without growing giddy; she therefore spoke with much circumspec-
tion,

tion, till, by the artful management of this high-titled lady, her fears vanished, and her reserve melted away like snow before the sun. Her Grace had the condescension to find so many things to admire in the dress of Lady Owen, so much to praise in the beauty of her daughter, that Lady Owen, who had hitherto looked up to the Countess of Uxington as the greatest of all her acquaintance, and scarcely talked of any body besides her friend the Countess, now began to think a great deal less of her Ladyship's pretensions to admiration or respect, when compared with a Duchess; and having got rid of every thing like diffidence, she gave the reins to her volubility, and let it gallop away with all her discretion.

How happened it, madam, asked her new friend, that your Ladyship was not at the opera last night? I thought your daughter quite a divinity, and so thought

thought Lord Fitzhenry, or I am mightily mistaken.

You are not mistaken, madam, said Fitzhenry, who was making love to the three young ladies in turn; I think your daughters, I think Miss Owen, I think all handsome women are divinities, and worship them as such, kneeling in the midst of them.

You see how it is, Lady Owen, continued the sly Duchess, casting a significant look at the mother of Fitzhenry, which look full of information was answered with another full of incredulity; Miss Owen, I suppose, madam, understands my Lord as well as he seems to understand her.

I dare to say, my lady, replied the delighted widow of Sir Ogle, leering on Fitzhenry and simpering, that all young ladies and young gentlemen do under-
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stand one another in the great world, such as we live in; as to the vulgarer sort of people, it is quite a different matter, for where there is not no quality on one side, nor no riches on the other, why they I believe come together without any understanding at all.

Your Ladyship, said the Countess, mortified, yet hardly able to suppress a laugh, I imagine must have mistaken her Grace's meaning.

Pardon me, Lady Uxington; I feel myself perfectly comprehended, retorted her Grace. Indeed I am so well convinced of what your Ladyship may suppose me to be quite ignorant, that, on the strength of my discernment, I shall immediately have the honour to solicit the acquaintance of your friend Lady Owen, and her very lovely daughter, whom I shall expect your Ladyship will bring with you to my next assembly.

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That is entirely out of my power, answered Lady Uxington a little peevishly; your Grace's night, I recollect is Thursday, and my Lord has an engagement at home that evening.

Unlucky! cried the other. However, madam, addressing herself to Lady Owen, I shall send you my cards to-morrow, and if you cannot come yourself, I hope you will send me your fair daughter, and then I shall be *sure* of Lord Fitzhenry at least.

Lady Uxington did not hear this last impertinence: displeased and disgusted, she had gone over to the younger party, who were all listening to Miss Owen's account of a court dress, which she declared had kept her waking six weeks to fancy the ornaments for it, not having time by day to think upon any one thing that was serious.

Lady Owen replied to her Grace's polite invitation, whilst her eyes followed the Countess with much satisfaction, finding her courage increase as her Ladyship retreated—Nothing, she said, would have made her so proud, as to wait on her Grace, and hoped, as Miss Owen would have no call to go to court every day in the year, some other time she should be more fortunate.

Miss Owen then, I presume, goes to the drawing room on Thursday?

Indeed, my Lady, Miss Owen *have* been so *delirious* in not being *percented*, that she can't now put it off no longer. It is quite shocking to hear oneself called out upon, in one's own assemblies, and concerts, and dinners, and suppers : Why sure, my Lady Owen, you do not consider Miss Owen's rank, beauty, and two hundred thousand pounds fortune, that you let her go about without being *percented* ;

percented ; for no young lady is nothing at all till she have been *percented*. So you see, my lady, how it is, and may well suppose what a hurry scurry we shall all be in if we live till Thursday comes : poor Miss Owen is half dead with the bustle we have had about it before the time.

This apology was addressed to her new friend by Lady Owen, with the same freedom as she would have spoken to her house-keeper ; and though the great Lady's features, talents and humour were all particularly arranged and disposed for laughter-loving ridicule, she had them so well under command, as not to *betray* even a smile, but what might have been construed into the most perfect approbation ; whilst she observed, that going to court need not prevent Miss Owen from doing her the honour of gracing her assembly in the evening.

I cannot

I cannot say directly, my Lady, how that may be, because Miss Owen, I suppose, if there is a ball, will stay for to partake of all that is going forwards. Miss Owen is always ready for a dance; and you know, my Lady, it might be taken amiss if she was to come away; for young ladies who have two hundred thousand pound are not per cented every day, or to be met with in every place.

Still her Grace's features were inflexibly steady: she only begged leave to assure her Ladyship, there would be no ball at St. James's before the eighteenth of January; in consequence of which assurance Lady Owen very joyfully accepted the flattering invitation for the following Thursday.

The Duchess of Radstock's views were generally so well covered as to escape common observation, and her present

sent designs so much beyond the most accurate glance of penetration, that it may not be unnecessary just to lift up the veil, and give my readers a peep into them. This Lady had no doubt in the world, but that Lord Fitzhenry wished to ingraft his honours on the rich, beautiful, luxuriant branch of trade and knighthood; whilst the *insuperable* bar which his Lordship had declared fate to have placed between them, *she* considered to be *family* objections to the connection. Moreover, her Grace had daughters for whom she was ambitious, and sons for whom she was mercenary: here was rank and fortune both slipping through her fingers, and she was now resolved to detain both in her own family, if it was possible to effect so capital a manœuvre.

I suppose, said she, your Ladyship is provided with a chaperone, or I should
be

be happy to offer my services to present Miss Owen.

Miss Owen, my Lady, is very much obliged to you, and so is Lady Owen : but my Lady Fenton have asked the favour before, and one does not like to refuse persons who owes one money any little matter of obligation that they axes one afterwards. My poor dear Sir Ogle used to say, that *borrowers* always look for more ceremony than *lenders* : why that should be, *you* nor *I*, my Lady, who does not mix with the *channel*, can neither of us make out ; but Sir Ogle was one of your polite men that, by way of amusement, sometimes looked into his affairs.

A very commendable turn, Lady Owen, for a man who wishes to aggrandize his daughter by enabling her to match with nobility. Pray how long, madam, has Lord Fitzhenry been attached

tached to Miss Owen? Have his proposals been made in form? and do Lord and Lady Uxington agree to them? I envy their happiness, and I hope they are sensible of it, to have such a lovely young creature in view for their son, who is quite a raw youth, and has seen very little of the world: besides, I am told, his inclinations are vastly unsteady.

The whole of this interesting conversation passed in a remarkably low key; Lady Owen, by nature, had a whining voice, and the Duchess artfully lowered hers to a whisper; so that it was impossible for the person nearest them to find out what they were talking about: but before my Lady Owen could make any reply to her Grace's last string of interrogations, Lord Uxington joined the party, gave them an account of the review, from which he was but just returned, and the confidential conference was broken off, or, more properly

M 5

speaking,

speaking, deferred to a better opportunity. Soon after the interruption, her Grace said she must ask for her carriage; but had the condescension to yield precedence to her familiar friend the knight's lady, who desired, if it made no difference, her coach might be called first, having other visits to pay: besides Miss Owen would want her jellies, want to go a-shopping, and want to dress; observing, that all young ladies' wants increased with their stature; which, whether her own or the observation of any body else, was certainly the wisest one that ever came from the lips of Lady Owen.

Soon after the morning and motley visitors had taken themselves off, some of the masters who attended Lady Elizabeth and Jemima came to give them a lesson. On these occasions, the Countess never chose to be absent from her daughters,

daughters, and Lord Fitzhenry was left alone with his father.

The Earl looked thoughtful, and, as thoughtful men are apt to do, walked about the room without seeming to know that any other person was present : but observing his son stealing up his hat, as if about to withdraw, which he purposed doing, that his presence might be no impediment to his father's meditations, he said : Fitzhenry, if you are not particularly engaged, I wish to detain you for a quarter of an hour. To which his Lordship replied with a great deal of intentional sincerity, He would never form any engagement that should interfere with his duty.

I have no reason to doubt your veracity, said the Earl ; and your assertions, at this period, convey to my mind more than common satisfaction, as I have been rather a little disconcerted by a
supposed

supposed breach of confidence, if not of duty.

For Heaven's sake, my dear father, explain the charge you have against me, that I may fully justify myself to your suspicions.—He was neither alarmed nor confounded, he expected to have heard that the unguarded declaration he made the preceding day in — square, was got round to his father, and prepared himself to give it a turn more ludicrous than serious; but the crash of worlds would hardly have affected him with equal astonishment, as did this question from Lord Uxington:—Is your heart free from the influence of Miss Melmoth's attractions?—His face answered in the negative, but his tongue was silent.

I am sorry to read in your countenance, my son, stronger proofs that you have wanted confidence in your father,
than

than any conveyed to me through the dirty channel of anonymous information.—Read, continued he, holding out a letter; read, on what grounds I have questioned you—I received it since I went out this morning; it was put into my hands by a chairman: how he came by it I know not. When you have perused it, I shall depend on yourself for ingenuously pointing out to me such parts of it as are founded on reality: consider me not as a severe judge, predetermined on condemnation; but a partial father, much more ready to acquit than condemn.

Fitzhenry, who in fact had no fault with which he could accuse himself, but the involuntary one of loving without hope, adoring an object, which to know and not adore would have been to sin against the powers of Beauty, the influence of Virtue, and Heaven's own attributes, which had taken up their radiant

diant abode in the soul of Miss Melmoth—as the effects of his first shock subsided, his recollection returned, and conscious rectitude did not permit him to hesitate a moment in opening the most secret recesses of his heart to his tender, generous father, who was so perfectly satisfied with the noble efforts Fitzhenry had exerted, so highly approved the whole tenor of his conduct, that, whilst he strongly recommended to him to persevere till he should have completed the victory over a passion every way unpromising, he did not command him to think no more of Miss Melmoth, he did not bind himself by oath, that Fitzhenry should never be the husband of Miss Melmoth.—What did he then?—why he left his grateful, his affectionate son the guardian of his own happiness, and the master of his own destiny.

Fitzhenry refused to look into the contents of the letter Lord Uxington had

had put into his hand, till this interesting conference was ended; choosing, that the explanation he owed to duty should have no sinister foundation: and, as the motive was candid, so were the effects it produced on the mind of his father, great almost beyond example. It might be called the contest of generosity and gratitude; for, when the father abolished his own authority, the son was more than ever determined to abide by his obedience. Having separated mutually satisfied with each other, Fitzhenry opened the anonymous letter, which contained these lines:

TO THE EARL OF UXINGTON.

MY LORD,

A friend takes the liberty of acquainting you, that when your son was paying a visit to Lord Wardour's family,

ly, he fell in love with a young woman, whose name is Melmoth. She is a rigid catholic, and your sister's fate is enough to deter you from giving any encouragement to another such unnatural alliance in your family: and if you are not already acquainted with your son's inclinations, it is high time that you should know them. And further, it is the advice of a friend, who is desirous to save you from an increase of domestic misery, that you put a speedy stop to your son's impending fate, and bind him, by your curse, never to pursue Miss Melmoth, who cannot ever be his, and will very soon be the wife of another.

ANONYMOUS.

Fitzhenry had much greater cause for pleasure than pain from the consequences produced by this evil-intended letter

letter having fallen into the hands of his father: but still his mind was torn, and his thoughts distracted.—Miss Melmoth soon to be the wife of another—that other must be Lord Wardour—Had Lord Wardour deceived him?—certainly not—Lord Wardour had only listened to his own arguments, and been persuaded by them—It was himself who had strengthened the fight, who had awakened the sensibility of Lord Wardour; and now that the greatest bar to his own success was removed by his father's concession, he execrated the romantic situation which had made him so active, as even to force that treasure upon another who did not incline to accept it, the possession of which would have been dearer to himself than existence, and crowned his days with felicity.

Such were the reflections that tore the mind of Lord Fitzhenry—but what distracted

distracted his thoughts was the impossibility of finding out who had been the fabricator of the anonymous letter.—There was not upon the face of the whole earth another human being who knew the secret of his attachment to Miss Melmoth but Lord Wardour—Pause here, reader—consider this circumstance—consider also the parity between love and jealousy—if one awakens, can the other be lulled to repose?—and when you discern the web that was laid by fatality for suspicion to work on, give that honour due to the candour of Fitzhenry, who with noble scorn rejected the base idea of affixing to the character of another any blemish which he would have spurned at in his own. I will leave, said he, the unravelment of this mysterious letter to time—I loved Wardour as my friend—I will do more, I will not hate him as my rival—I cannot cease to adore Miss Melmoth—but I will teach my
stubborn

stubborn heart to feel only sentiments of respect for the wife of Lord War-dour.

I cannot cease to adore Miss Melmoth, was the expression of his heart; to wean himself from the attachment, was the counsel of wisdom. In some degree he followed the dictates of both: when he thought of her, it was with adoration; but, to think of her as little as possible, he plunged deeper than ever into all the innocent gaieties that offered themselves as local remedies to his hopeless situation. He was less at home than before the explanation, and preferred the company of his sisters, who were not in his confidence, to the society of his parents, who were: the lively sallies of the former helped him forward in the difficult task of forgetfulness; the tender participation of the latter unfitted him for the contest. They would sacrifice every thing to him, and

and should he sacrifice nothing to them?

—He had no merit in giving up an alliance that it was now impossible to effect; but in appearing to give it up with cheerfulness he supposed himself greater than Scipio.

In pursuit of a cure, he often visited in —— square, so often indeed that her Grace began to entertain hopes not much to the honour of his fidelity. The fair Glarinda, she had been assured by Lady Owen herself, was to be married to Lord Fitzhenry, when he came back from his travels: Not, she said, that they had entrusted her with their intentions, because they chose to surprise her, as well as all the rest of the world, by an unexpected wedding. But I know better things, added she, and could have told you, my Lady, how it would be, when I saw them both ready to die for love the very first time they ever set eyes on one another.—

Her

Her Grace supposed all this to be exactly true; but, instead of being discouraged, she redoubled her attentions to both parties, firmly persuaded from experience, that nothing was so easy as to put asunder those who happen not to be finally joined together.

It has always been allowed by the faculty, that there is more danger in a relapse, than in the first stage of a fever; and if love is a fever either of the heart or the brain, why may not the same consequences be expected? Fitzhenry had already in imagination crowned himself with the laurels of victory, when a large packet from Wales overturned all his ideal conquest, and convinced him he was a slave, at the instant he supposed himself to be a conqueror.—The sight of Lord Wardour's writing on the superscription suspended his faculties for a moment—he looked again — hesitated — coloured — turned pale—

pale—trembled— and at last broke open the seal, a martyr to suspense, yet fainting at the approach of certainty.— The first two lines which met his eager enquiries had like to have destroyed him—it was this—The possession of Miss Melmoth's heart and person, estimable and beautiful as they are—Fitzhenry could read no farther; he dashed the papers on the floor, threw himself into a chair, his eyes borrowed from his soul a few drops of weakness, which might have convinced those who do not know it already, that there is no mind, however great or manly, that is at all times guarded against the surprises of sensibility.—What a blockhead I am! he exclaimed—she is married—or going to be married—Be it so—what is there in Miss Melmoth's marriage that should surprise or afflict me?—But I will know the worst, cried he, and again snatched up the letter—These were the contents.

LETTER.

LETTER.

The possession of Miss Melmoth's heart and person, estimable and beautiful as they are, dear Fitzhenry, would have been far from completing my happiness, if the consequence of being happy must have occasioned your defeat and mortification; had I even seen with passion those charms which I now only behold with brotherly kindness, still I would have perished in my own flames, rather than build my felicity on your infelicity. I lay you under no such obligation in the present case; but though I have no sacrifice of inclination to offer at the shrine of friendship; I have been the guardian of your interest, and the returns I have to make you are not inconsiderable, at least if you can find either consolation or profit in something more than the good opinion of Miss Melmoth: my letter must

must be a long one ; I therefore keep this piece of intelligence till I draw towards a conclusion, to give the whole a better chance of being honoured with a patient perusal.

Could you really imagine, Fitzhenry, that I was so little skilled in the soul's language as to read for it mere lip language? Can you suppose that whilst you deceived yourself you could deceive me also? did you really wish that I should marry Miss Melmoth, when you advised me to marry her? If such were your wishes as well as your instructions, I am less than a novice and you more than a cynic.—To love Miss Melmoth with moderation I must suppose to be impossible: another had superseded her in my affections, or I might have averred it impossible from my own experience.—You have owned to me that you have loved her—how then will you exculpate yourself from the charge of loving her

her to adoration?—I am not to be imposed on, Fitzhenry—I revere the honourable motive which led you into the mistake of supposing you could plead the cause of another against yourself.—There are only two disengaged women that I know of in this nation, to whom Lord Fitzhenry may not make pretensions with the most flattering prospects of success: one of the sacred two has long been the idol of my soul's affection; your interest and mine, my Lord, can never interfere, though I may some day call upon you to exert your best influence in my favour.

I am about to give you a short history of my family connections, with that of Miss Melmoth's, and the engagements entered into by them, which we are both resolutely determined never to ratify. For this confession, I have reasons which you do not now suspect, and it is time enough to declare them

when I am a free man; at present I am not my own master—the shattered health and worse spirits of my only surviving parent keep me silent—I must see her restored to peace and strength before I venture to unfold the secrets of my mind to her ear.—Fitzhenry, I am shocked at the disappointments, for which, by delay, I am hoping to prepare this dear, this tender mother; it may be many months before I disclose my established opinions. Truth and conviction—who can withstand them?—But this is not the history I have promised you;—if you do not find it brilliant or entertaining, it is because there are no scenes of passion with which I can possibly enliven it.

When I first spoke to you on the subject of my entanglement, I told you at what an early age Mrs. Melmoth brought her niece to settle in the neighbourhood of my father—of the intimacy

timacy that succeeded—and explained to you the attachment which has since that time ever subsisted between the two houses. I am four years older than Miss Melmoth; I perfectly remember when I first saw her in the arms of her aunt, and was bid to call her my little wife; I have since heard my mother say, she was at that time only two months old. The first word she was taught to pronounce, was the name of your friend; and the first sentence—I love you.—But this was the language of parrots, not of inspiration or anticipation.

Every day for six years the same lesson was repeated to me, that I must love Miss Melmoth, and never do or say any thing that might displease her. The fear of offending grew into habit, but it did not fit the shape of my mind, and I disliked the child who was often a restraint on the exercises in which I

N 2 delighted.

delighted. She on her part was threatened with my displeasure for the smallest offence—by which ill management our disgust to each other was perfectly mutual.—Still we were constantly reminded of the union for which we were intended; — we never met without quarrelling, or parted without anger; —a happy preface of matrimonial comfort:—but here let me do justice to the most amiable temper in the world, and confess myself entirely to blame in all our little skirmishes. Do not hate me, Fitzhenry, for the sins of my childhood: but it is impossible to tell you the wicked gratification of my mischievous heart, whenever I could tease and torment the unoffending being so dear to you, and now so revered by me.

My father was the friend of Lord Hillford, the husband of your unfortunate aunt. I did not know that she
was

was the sister of your father, or any relation to the family. Your letter from Mount Clear gave me the first impression of a fact that has since been ascertained by my mother, who knew and loved Lady Hillford. Their acquaintance commenced in Ireland, but was too soon interrupted by the removal of my parents to Northangle—I have wavered so long from the point to which I was bound, that I must, by way of bringing my subject together, again repeat to you, that my father was the friend of Lord Hillford, and that not knowing what to do with me at home, he sent me to a college near the residence of Lord Hillford, whose establishment was then at Nice; and under his Lordship's auspices I pursued my studies from ten to fifteen, when your aunt being advised to try the air of Naples for a languishing indisposition, my Lord attended her there, and my father ordered me home.—I was too much of
a boy

a boy at so early a period of my life, to pay much attention to any thing besides my book and my sports; the one by necessity, the other by choice: but I perfectly recollect that I received great kindness from Lord Hillford, and the tenderest attentions from his Lady; and that I repaid her for them, with almost filial affection. She appeared happy:—had I then known it was only in appearance that she was happy, my heart is not so *impenetrable* as to have withheld its first offerings of sympathy to suffering excellence, like hers: the seeds of susceptibility, that nature has sown in my heart, her sorrows would have matured.—I would say much more on the wrongs of this lovely and beloved martyr; but a sense of favours commands me to be silent: I love Lady Hillford, I also am indebted for many obligations to Lord Hillford.

On

On my return to Northangle, I found Miss Melmoth advanced five years in height, in grace and in loveliness; yet still she was a child, and though beautiful as an angel, my heart felt no predilection in her favour; yet now it was fully revealed to me, that it could never make another choice without my incurring a denunciation which I would not have incurred for the universe.

During the twelve months I remained at home, I often called myself to account for that repugnance which I felt to obey the will of my father—it must be obeyed—I thought too that it should be obeyed—but determined this last proof of my obedience should be delayed to the latest moment. I grew tired of Wales: I have confessed I did not like Miss Melmoth; she was a chit, a baby,—how could I like Miss Melmoth? I hated her cunning aunt; she resembled a witch, and in my thoughts I accused
her

her of having cast her spells around us all, intoxicated my father, infatuated my mother, and made me the prey of her ambitious artifices.—I desired to get rid of my torments at any rate, and solicited for a removal to Eton:—my father consented; my tutor accompanied me to college, from which æra I date the happiest event of my life. I had there the honour to cultivate your friendship, and was by your means introduced to the whole of Lord Uxington's family. Oh! Fitzhenry, do you think I shall ever forget the delicious fortnight which your father, mother, sisters, William Montreville, Montague Davenport, you, and I, once enjoyed at Sir Thomas Montreville's castle in —shire, or the many, many still more sweet and delicious days we have since passed together at Uxington Lodge? You may have forgotten, but I never shall forget them.

On

On my second visit to Northangle, I had completed my eighteenth year; Miss Melmoth her fourteenth: she was then all that heaven and nature could make her. I confessed her beauty, her wit, her propriety, her understanding, her accomplishments—I confessed them all with that unimpassioned fondness I should have bestowed on a darling sister. My father and mother mistook the sentiment, they were more than satisfied—they were happy. The deception was neither premeditated nor intentional—I gave those praises to Miss Melmoth, which it would have been the height of injustice to withhold; but a new obstacle had arisen to my forming any sentiments for this charming girl, warmer than those of fraternal admiration, esteem and affection. I had no longer a heart to offer her—mine had played the truant, and deserted on a secret service: had it returned with me to Wales, I should certainly have forced it to fall at the feet of Miss Mel-

moth. — What then ?— Miss Melmoth would not have condescended to accept a sacrifice so ungraciously offered.—Of this truth I mean to convince you before I put the finishing line to my voluminous packet — after-circumstances may shew you, Fitzhenry, hardly as your patience must be put to the trial, that for my own sake it is incumbent on me to be perfectly explicit, however little you may at present think yourself concerned in my adventures.

Fitzhenry paused at the conclusion of the last sentence. There are sensations to which the mind of man is accessible, that do not admit of description; and amongst the indescriptible number may be classed the various emotions which revolved in that of his Lordship from first seeing the hand writing of his friend Wardour on the superscription, to that part of the letter at which he stopped to give himself a moment for
confide-

consideration; but still his thoughts were all dancing the hays in so joyful a state of confusion, that though he fancied he saw many resolvable hints in some of Lord Wardour's expressions, yet he knew not how to arrange them, nor could he even comprehend what they meant, so clearly as many readers have doubtless already done without my assistance.—He reverted again to Lord Wardour's epistle:—let us do so likewise.

Continuation of the Letter.

By this time, Fitzhenry, I had found out that it was not the unripened beauties of Miss Melmoth, to which my heart formed objections: no, it had surrendered to another as young as Miss Melmoth, and to that other alone will ever consent to unite itself—but understand me clearly—this was not the language

language I spoke in the life time of my father: I did not then even presume to give hope a place in the most retired of my thoughts; on the contrary, I resolved never to offend him, and rather to be unhappy myself, than occasion him unhappiness.

I remained with my family several months: Mrs. Melmoth and her niece were our constant associates, and we seemed cut off from all the rest of the world; the former I never could like, the latter it was impossible not to esteem; her thousand charms, her million powers of charming were seen by me with indifference; but the innocent unreserve of her manners, the ingenuous frankness of her disposition, made large demands on my fraternal affections, and I answered them all.—She was past the days of absolute childhood, and it is probable, from the sisterly freedom with which she condescended to treat me, she

she had ceased to remember the nursery tales of a union which were no longer repeated: she claimed me as a brother, and in that character I have assured her of my tenderest protection.—The compliment of silence paid to her sex and delicacy was not extended to your friend; my father had settled every thing for our establishment; and by him I was informed that, when of age, I should be at liberty to address Miss Melmoth, till which time I might dispose of myself as I thought proper. Guess if this indulgence did not in a great measure make up for the disagreeable condition which was annexed to it: at least it would afford me many opportunities of delay: and protraction, in some certain situations, may be called a second if not a first-rate blessing. I laid my plans accordingly—I set out with visiting every part of Wales, with which I was not before acquainted, and contrived to manage so adroitly, as to expend

pend six summer months on my first expedition. The following winter I passed with my family, and though I did not meet Miss Melmoth with the ardours of a lover, I beheld her with the affection of a friend.

Early in the spring I passed over to Ireland, and made the tour of that country, from one end of it to the other; by which ingenious device I contrived to dissipate as much of my limited time as brought my father's matrimonial views into the compass of six months, but put back my own to a greater distance than ever.—I have now, said I, made myself acquainted with two of the extraneous branches of our nation:—my next visit shall be to Scotland; and afterwards a tour through the mother country will for the present finish my travels. My father asked if it was possible to do so much in so short a time; and it was with difficulty I persuaded him

him to let me try the experiment. I saw you on my arrival in England: you had the goodness to take me to your family: with what sorrow did I quit it, with what regret permit you to go to Wales without me! Do you see my motive for this self-denial? My time was come, but my inclinations were wandering far, very far from Miss Melmoth. Oh! Fitzhenry, had I foreseen the blow that fate suspended over my head—could I have divined that I had embraced my dear father for the last time—this is a subject that grieves my penitent soul—I will have no more of it; but hasten to another better calculated to amuse thoughts, and perhaps to gratify your inclinations.

On my return to Northangle, the ladies, who had before the goodness to administer comfort to my disconsolate mother, retired to their own house; and of course nothing has yet been said
by

by her or Mrs. Melmoth which has any tendency to the old plans of operation. I found Miss Melmoth's spirits much depressed; I attributed the absence of her charming vivacity to a natural cause. My dear father was passionately fond of her: the sorrow she expressed for his loss, the melancholy it impressed on her features, added interest to beauty, and did honour to the exquisite sensibility of her nature: if you are offended with the warmth of my language, remember I use it to secure my own personal safety; for would you not cut the throat of that man who could adopt any other when speaking or writing of Miss Melmoth? —Can you surmise that I have made this amiable girl the confidante of my passion for another? The name and connections of that other are the only part of the secret I have kept to myself; I reserve both in the *core* of my heart till I have paved the way to a successful disclosure of them.

Yesterday

Yesterday I made my confession, and after I had made it, asked if she could pardon me for having surrendered my heart to any other than herself. She stretched out her beautiful hand in token of amity, and without confusion or agitation assured me, with the most fascinating candour, that she had always considered me so strongly in the light of a brother, that, if I had honoured her with any other sort of affection, she would frankly confess it never could have been returned by her. In the sacred character so sweetly encouraged to lay hold of, I ventured to demand, as a proof of her sisterly regard, that she would repay my confidence with her own, and tell me what she thought of a certain friend of mine. At the name of Fitzhenry, her eloquent blood, which before only softly glided through her transparent veins, rushed impetuously into them, and overflowed the lily of her
her

her complexion ; the very tone of her voice was altered ; it was more plaintive and less steady than when she declared she could never have been the wife of Wardour.—Fitzhenry, I know the bias of her pure inclination ; it would be ungenerous to communicate all that I do know ;—you have no reason to despair ; but the substance of our conversation I shall not report even to you. Perhaps I have not acted so cautiously by the affairs of your heart—I confess the charge, and that I made use of your secret as a decoy to catch the innocent effusions of her ingenuous soul.—I meant well—I think myself entitled to your pardon, and not only to your pardon, but your acknowledgments.—Whatever you say in my favour to your dear family, it shall be the business of my whole life to ratify—and to deserve their approbation.—Tell them this—
and

and tell Lady Eli—No, no, tell her nothing, but that her brother has not a truer friend in the world than her—pish!—his



WARDOUR.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

